Metalsmith

Spring 1990
Volume 10 Number 2
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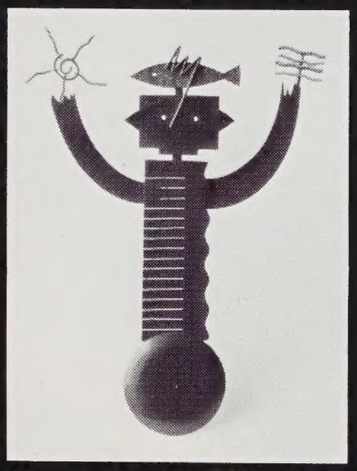
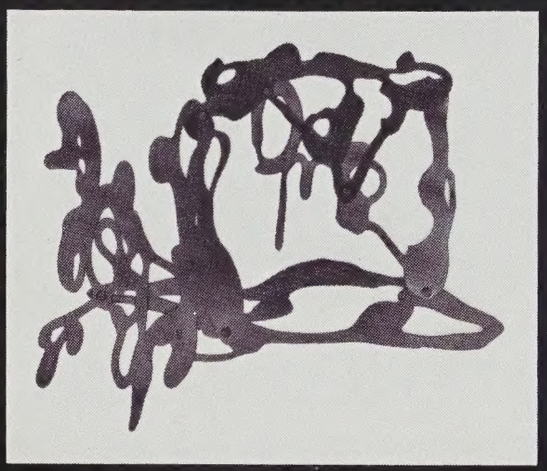


"The Neptune" Brooch, 1989, silver, paint

Robert Smit

MAY 9 — JUNE 2



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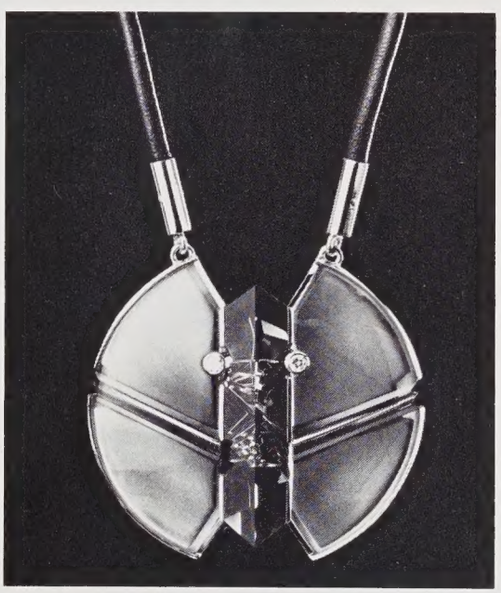

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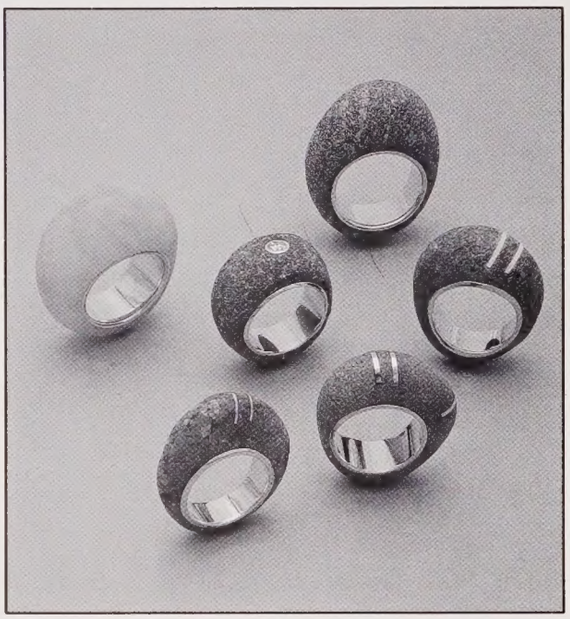

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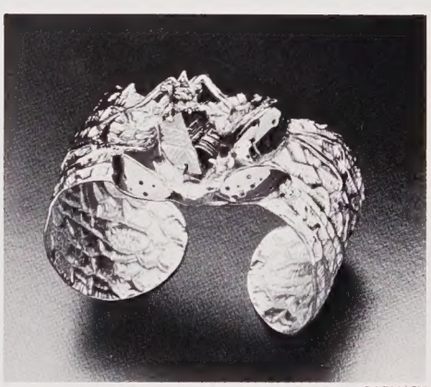

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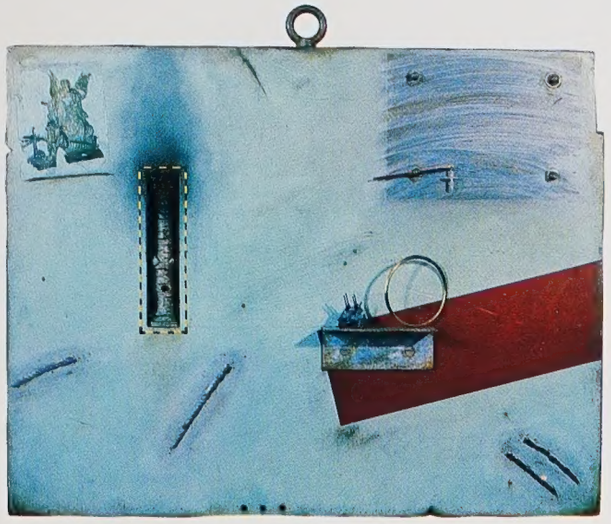
Metalsmith

Spring 1990 Volume 10 Number 2



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enamel on copper, 20k gold, 3 x 1 1/2 x 3/8", 1990
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Editorial

Zeitgeist. Goethe started it, but everyone is using it. Zeitgeist – the spirit of an age – is one of those cosmic explanations for cultural euphoria. From supply-side economists to neo-expressionist artists, riding the Zeitgeist means being delivered from everyday banality. To glean the spirit of an age – the Age of Enlightenment, the Space Age, the Age of Aquarius – is to discover via crystal ball the social mindset, to be intoxicated by the heady idea of something big on the horizon. In the art world, being fashionable is trivial, but being part of the Zeitgeist, or, even better, having your work elucidate the Zeitgeist, now, that carries the weight of great expectations.

Who needs the Zeitgeist, anyway? The art audience, for one, dependent on the leadership of museums, the marketplace and the press, requires the comfort of identifiable trends as an assurance that the future is being made right before their eyes. They need to be convinced of a time present, or just past, that promises lasting significance. When suffocated by an overheated and erratic pluralism, they long to breathe the air of permanence in contemporaneity. At such a time, they gladly embrace some generalization that will later be recognized as a defining style or movement. As a result, every so often, a blockbuster show is willed upon the public, which proclaims a new epoch in cultural history, a new sensibilty apparent in a new esthetic. While individual achievements by discrete artists are an anathema, the art audience will throng to something touted as "history in the making."

The recurrence of a defining spirit in art has been of keen interest in Germany. I am thinking of "Documenta" as well as the 1982 Berlin "Zeitgeist" exhibition, whose title openly brandished its polemic. These ambitious surveys drew the museum-going public with the promise of a new wave awash on European shores. Just when it seemed certain that the New World dominated the art market, where New York in specific had preempted all other culture capitals as the vanguard of taste, a powerful machine of fashion and curatorial acumen was revving its engines on the Continent. The romantic notion of the Zeitgeist, the rightful heritage of the Western tradition had been summoned again to energize and vitalize a new German expressionism. The attraction for curatorial premonitions has now landed on the doorstep of art jewelry in the form of this ambitious series of exhibitions called "Ornamenta." Taking its cue from the art world, "Ornamenta 1" sets out to induce an appropriate Zeitgeist for jewelry through a "world's fair" of international examples, anticipating that the elusive spirit will reveal itself in this convened assembly of diverse talent.

Jewelry's distinction within the arts comes from its direct relationship with the body and personality. The wearer must make conscious choices about jewelry every day, must handle it and place it on his or her body, must determine the appropriate piece for the activities of the day and must submit to reactions from friends and associates. Jewelry is thus communicative and, ultimately, rhetorical as it prompts a discussion over contemporary preferences not only of art but of social values. Perhaps it is because in Western cultures jewelry has been relegated to the trivial pursuit of fashion that contemporary jewelers seek to overcome their work's assumed transcience by pointing to something larger than the jewelry itself – to the social milieu and cultural temperament in which the jewelry functions.

Contemporary jewelers want to persuade an audience detached from art by a mandatory "distance" that an intense satisfaction, an intimate experience, can be had in the metamorphosis of personal adornment. Contemporary jewelry declares that everyone can speak with his own body about art and society, and isn't this the ultimate statement, the ultimate pledge of allegiance, to wear the spirit of the age on one's sleeve? Jewelry is real life. It is socially interactive and esthetically sublime. In combination, these factors make jewelry one of the most potent cultural indicators of an egalitarian society.

Admittedly, to date, even with major developments, jewelry has encountered a climate of confusion over its social role. Where conventional wisdom equates jewelry's material worth with intangible social status, jewelers reject precious metals and gemstones. Where conventional wisdom perceives jewelry's place as subordinate to clothing and dress, jewelers create disturbing and frenetic instruments of passion that mirror the psychic complexity of contemporary urban life. As jewelry strives to be more expressive, it becomes less acceptable within the traditional codes of propriety and commerce. The question is, can jewelry sustain radical innovation, reconstituting the meaning of self and society in a series of material signifiers without the benefit of a acquiescent public? Can there be a unifying Zeitgeist without a consensus on jewelry's social purpose?

The above is excerpted from the catalog essay I wrote as the American advisor for "Ornamenta 1," a catalog unfortunately published in German only. This controversial exhibition ignited both scorching rebuttal from the jewelry community, particularly in Germany, and accolades from visitors, more of which appears in this issue.

— SB

Metalsmith

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Editor: Sarah Bodine
Design: Mary Melilli, Richard Mehl
Circulation: Bob Mitchell
Contributing Editors: Jamie Bennett, Bruce Metcalf, Tim McCreight, Bernard Bernstein, Robert Cardinale, Elizabeth Skidmore Sasser, C.E. Licka, Deborah Norton
Advertising: Bob Mitchell
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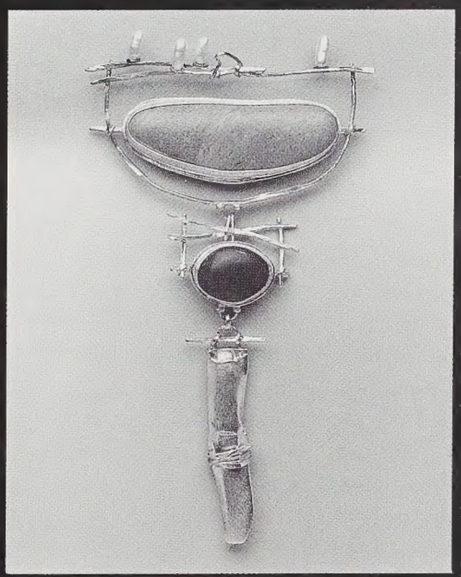

CAROLYN MORRIS BACH, Brooch; 18K, fine Silver, Japanese river rocks, Pearl

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What's Coming...

in the next issue

The Jewelry of Alexander Calder
Don Friedlich talks with Garth Clark: CDK Gallery
Reflections on the miniature
Elsa Freund: 40 years of "woman-made jewelry"

Letters

Dear Editor:

"Crafts Council to be closed" read the alarming headline in the *London Sunday Times* on September 17, 1989. There followed a substantial article outlining the "plot" by which the imminent demise of the Crafts Council seems assured. Could it be possible? The closure of the citadel of British crafts? The cessation of the organization that everyone loves to hate? The put-upon, reviled, loathed, loved, adored (in equal measure) centre of advanced, and sometimes retarded, crafts? The shock announcement certainly has tongues wagging, but even the sternest foes are dumbfounded. All share the sense that a major black hole will appear in the crafts universe. So what has happened? After responding to severe cuts, the Crafts Council turned around and earned enough to pay all of its own salaries, reportedly £700,000. It raised £800,000 and sold £2.5 million worth of work through fairs, etc. One would have thought that positive reinforcement would have been forthcoming. Moreover, in the realm of job creation, over 70% of the craft studios that the *Crafts* Council has assisted in establishing since 1971 are still operating. But, apart from the economic justifications necessary in Thacherite Britain, the plain fact is that this is an organization that has provided a model for the international community. The ripples initiated by Crafts and the Council's exhibitions became, in many instances, tidal waves. To set this unique cultural phenomenon adrift in the ocean of the underfunded and no doubt unreceptive Arts Council is folly. Write letters, complain, throw eggs, but don't let it happen!

– James Evans, London

Dear Editor:

I was dismayed to learn that the British government plans to dismantle the Crafts Council. When I first moved to England in 1985 I was very impressed by British crafts – not only by the high quality of the work but also by the financial support and encouragement crafts was receiving from the government via the Crafts Council Gallery, *Crafts* magazine and the helpful Crafts Council staff, who was always eager to supply photos, slides and any information an American craft writer with no contacts in Britain might need. By providing grants to enable craftspeople to establish independent studios and by producing a guide to private crafts galleries, the Crafts Council was able to directly support the individuals that made crafts happen. Under the aegis of the Crafts Council, British crafts have become an important force in the international crafts world.

But now all this is to change. The Crafts Council, currently an independent organization, is to become a department of the Arts Council. This downgrading of status, with all that it implies, will undoubtedly result in the British craft movement being diminished. As well as being a great loss for Britain, this will also be a loss for American craftspeople who have frequently been inspired by the work of their British counterparts.

– Deborah Norton, London

Dear Editor:

As a metalsmith I am keenly aware of how metal objects should be handled and packed. Having exhibited my work over the past 10 years in a variety of settings, including museums, art centers, universities and galleries, I have continuously been appalled by the poor handling and poor quality of packing by most of these institutions. The last straw was the return of a sculpture of mine from a craft museum in New York City. After making a wooden crate and custom fitting the interior with form-fitting foam – to cure the problem of relocation in repacking the work – the crate was returned with the foam taken out and replaced loosely, the position completely altered and the work completely exposed. The work had been sent plastic-wrapped and bubble-wrapped for easy handling and protection. This museum is a leading institution for decorative art. It has a registrar and staff, which should be professional and up-to-date in terms of care and handling.

It seems to me that there is a lack of understanding among these institutions about metal objects. They take prints easily, patinas can be chaffed, thus marring a beautiful finish, and so on. In my case, my sculptures are hollow and care must be taken to ensure that nothing can dent or crush the forms. In one instance, a well-known gallery in San Francisco returned a work unprotected and unsecured in a box with only three pieces of stiff foam floating around the work. Amazing! Are these problems only happening to me? I provide unpacking and repacking instructions, both verbal and visual. In the past I even provided extra pairs of gloves (I know they were never used).

I think the time has come to prepare a pamphlet on the handling of metal objects, small and large, and their preparation for packing and shipping. It might be distributed through the Society of North American Goldsmiths. A mailing of the pamphlet could be sent to the major institutions that deal with crafts and metals, specifically. They need to be educated.

– William Baran-Mickle, Pittsford, NY

Dear Editor:

I am writing this brief note to express my concurrence with the opinions expressed by Kay White Puinn in the Winter issue of *Metalsmith*. I don't expect to appreciate all manner of work exhibited in the publication, but I, too, am disappointed to see a completely nonmetallic object gracing the cover of *Metalsmith* magazine.

– Fredric B. DeVantier, Sanborn, NY

Dear Editor:

I wanted to let you know I enjoy the new format of the reviews – the look is much cleaner. And the last issue of *Metalsmith* had a great variety of articles. I particularly enjoyed Bruce Metcalf's text and photos. Keep up the great work!

– Dawn Nakanishi, Redwood City, CA

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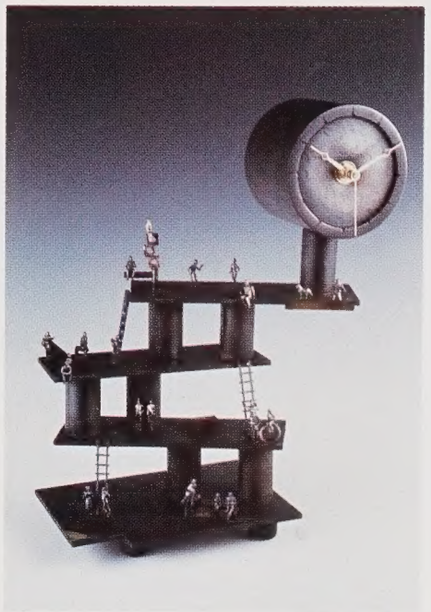

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Recent Sightings

by Bruce Metcalf

Here's a puzzle for you: what does it mean, to make something by hand?

Some people will tell you that making anything by hand is an anachronism now that Americans wallow in an avalanche of manufactured goods. Since machines can make any functional object more quickly and cheaply than a craftsman ever could, all handmade objects represent nothing more than wistful nostalgia for pre-industrial culture. The craftsman, then, is a stubborn holdout, already obsolete. And the act of making things by hand is both a denial of modern reality and an attempt to live in a fantasy world.

Others will take an esthetic argument to dismiss handwork. The mode of production, they say, is irrelevant. The value of a work of art lies in its expressive quality, or its intellectual adventurousness, or its ability to communicate an ineffable mystery, or whatever your favorite esthetic theory of the moment decrees. But if the method of production counted as esthetically valuable, then all sorts of junk would become art. Things can be handmade and still be hideous: inept home-hobbyist furniture, decoupage, nylon stocking dolls, junior high school shop projects.

There are a number of other arguments used to reduce handwork to meaninglessness. Generally, they all hark back to the Aristotelian hierarchy that places ideas superior to physical reality. The idea of a chair is superior to any chair, since the idea, not being subject to the flaws inevitably present in a real chair, is more perfect. Because thinking is the manipulation of ideas, and labor is the manipulation of things, thinking is superior to labor. Thus, mind is divided from body, with mind in the sky and body in the mud.

Which means, of course, the work of the hand is always dirty when compared to the work of the mind. This stupid bigotry is replicated in thousands of ways in our culture, from the comparative pay scales of administrators vs. laborers, to the comparative status of art vs. craft. One of the side effects is that nobody seems to know how handwork can carry any inherent meaning, or why it is significant in our lives.

At one time, the value of handwork was found in its mastery. The master craftsman was universally respected, and his hard-won skill universally admired. Mastery, of course, was not commonplace: it was reserved for those who served long apprenticeships and who had practiced their craft for many decades. These craftsmen set the standard of excellence by the practiced touch of the hand, not by a flawless machine-made finish. But now that the sterile perfection of mass-produced goods makes expertise in a craft appear anachronistic, mastery no longer carries unquestioned authority.

It is the opposition between machine production and handwork that suggests an answer to the puzzle. William Morris, moved by a fantasy of medieval craftsmen happily plying their trades in a culture that needed and respected hand skills, proposed that handcrafts could cure the ills of industrial society. He saw that factory workers were alienated from the products of their work: not only did the profits wind up in the owner's pocket, but the fragmentation of tasks had robbed workers of any personal attachment to their production. Most laborers were (and are) forced to work on only one step of the manufacturing process, and were required to repeat that step endlessly. Nor could the laborer participate in the design of the goods he made. Worst of all, most factory work in the 19th century took place in hideous working conditions.

Morris contrasted a factory worker's situation with that of an idealized craftworker. The handworker could determine the shape, color and finish of her products. She understood the techniques and materials used in all aspects of her work. Frequently, she worked on each object from its inception to its completion. She exercised a degree of control over her labor that was lost to the factory worker. Morris correctly observed that control over one's working conditions has a profound psychological impact, an idea that has been recently confirmed by studies that correlate job stress with lack of self-determination. The factory worker could feel neither affection nor pride for her work, but the handworker could strive for any degree of excellence or individuality that she chose. While Morris was foolish in his hope for craft to solve social problems, he was probably right in his understanding of unalienated labor. One of the meanings of handwork is that it can heal the rift between producer and product.

While other professions might offer self-determination, very few so intimately involve the hand. Our hands are our most sensitive tools: they contain the highest concentration of nerve endings and offer the finest degree of motor control of all the body's extremities. The hand is designed to be our agent of physical contact with the world, and also our agent of action. Phsysiologically, the hand is constructed to be used. While vision may be our most important conduit to the world, the hand offers a parallel means, equally rich and varied, to apprehend our physical environment. In the post-industrial age, most activities (like writing this column) mechanize or bypass the hand altogether. In craftsmanship, the complex potential of the hand can be fully realized.

The root of alienation may lie in the denial of the whole person. Holistic medicine suggests that healing must occur as much in the mind as in the body: so why isn't there a holistic attitude toward work that proposes labor must occur as much with the body as the mind? Individuals live as much in their physical bodies – and thus the hands – as in their brains, but our culture (encouraged by every western philosopher since Aristotle) seems to demand an emphasis on the conceptual that is completely imbalanced. Most craftsmen sense all this intuitively. They choose handwork because it offers a degree of self-determination impossible to find in most other professions and because it closes the rift between mind and body. Handwork is not obsolete, not by any means.

Still, the meaning of handwork is dismissed in most segments of modern culture, even by craftsmen. It could be that a materialistic society values product over process. Most Americans are so caught up with price (or, for intellectuals, the esthetic implications) of the object, that the conditions of labor are insignificant. Too bad. With so much talk about alienation and urban despair, you would think that any means to offer people a measure of control over their own lives would be greeted with tremendous enthusiasm.

Bruce Metcalf teaches jewelry and metalsmithing at Kent State University and writes a regular column for Metalsmith.

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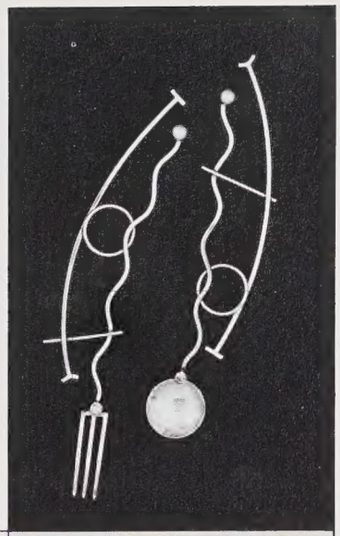

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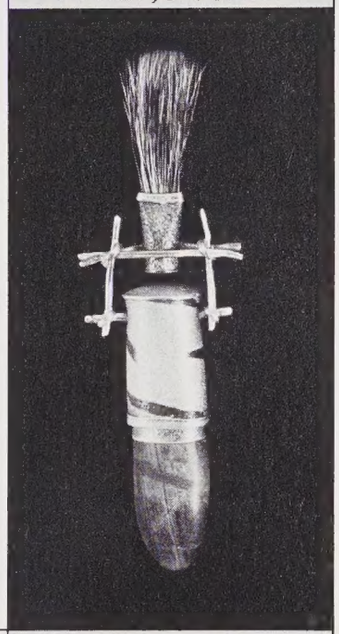

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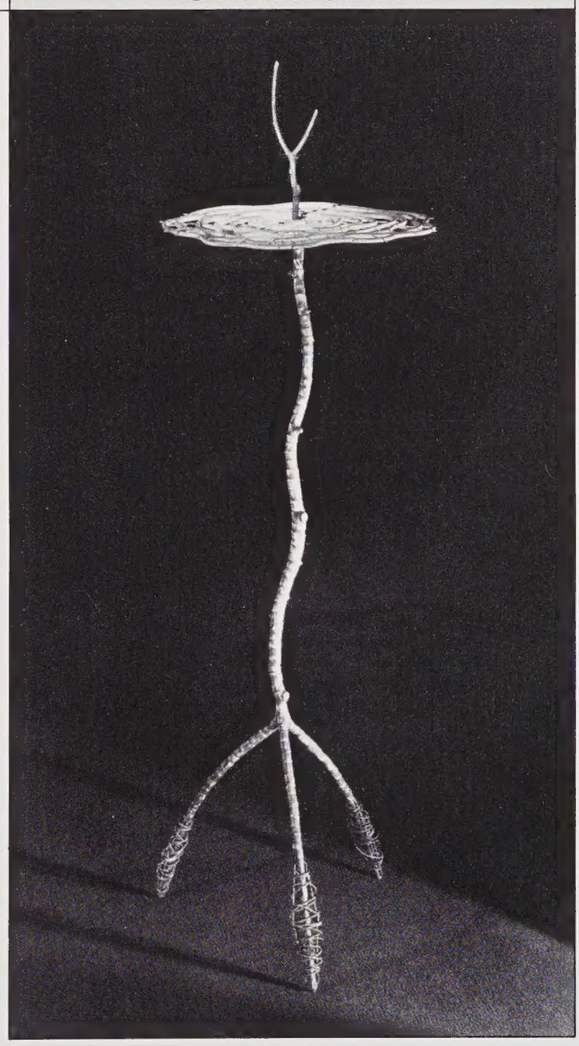

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Books

Artists' Jewellery: Pre-Raphaelite to Arts and Crafts
by Charlotte Gere and Geoffrey C. Munn
244 Pages; 103 color illus., 141 bw illus.
Antique Collectors Club Ltd., Great Britain, 1989

The second half of the 19th century can be claimed for the decorative arts. Not only had there been an increased production of glass, ceramic, metalwork and furniture but the creative accomplishments in these fields were a major influence on all the arts. When we speak of the Pre-Raphaelites, we are speaking of essentially decorative arts styles. For the first time since the Renaissance, there was a confluence of painters, sculptors, craftsmen and architects working in the applied arts, challenging conventional design and the then currrent reliance on debilitating historicism.

The authors, Gere and Munn, noted authorities on the decorative arts of the period, have put together a narrative that takes as its focus the long-neglected area of late 19th-century jewelry and, specifically, jewelry made by individual practitioners. Although the book primarily serves collectors with an eye to connoisseurship and provenance, they have put together a credible portrait of the times, with the necessary social, cultural and economic influences that mitigated changing esthetics.

Their research has uncovered a vast array of significant practitioners: D.G. Rossetti, Alfred Gilbert, Charles Ricketts, Henry Wilson in England, Philippe Wolfers in Belgium, George Feure in France, W.L. von Cranach in Germany were presented in a new light as a result of their survey. Together with many of the well-known designers like Tiffany, Lalique, Archibald Knox of Liberty, Georg Jensen, Raymond Templier, the inclusion of fine artists' jewelry makes for a cogent understanding of jewelry as a progressive art form.
– SB

Artists Anodizing Aluminum by David LaPlantz
$19.95, 200 pages, 273 illustrations
Published by Press de LaPlantz,
899 Bayside Cutoff, Bayside, CA 95524, 1988

Artists Anodizing Aluminum is well titled, for it is not only about small-scale anodizing but also about producing art. David LaPlantz has written a graphic, easily read, practical book on the sulfuric acid process of anodizing aluminum for both beginner and experienced anodizer.

AAA is a first-hand account about how David LaPlantz anodizes. He takes you through his studio set-up and shows you how he does his work. But not to lull you into thinking that there is only one way to anodize aluminum, LaPlantz includes a guest-artist chapter that exposes different options available in working aluminum, and, finally, LaPlantz takes you on a field trip to a commercial anodizer to give you some idea of how industry works.

Sulfuric acid anodizing is a simple but potentially hazardous process that should not be taken lightly, and LaPlantz clearly describes the hazards and safety procedures that must be observed. In the chapter on safety, thoughtfully placed at the beginning, he writes not only about the safety equipment you must have but also about the toxic (hazardous) materials that you will be handling, producing and how to dispose of them correctly when you are done.

He has managed to write about the anodizing process so that a novice should be able to set up an anodizing bath and trouble shoot any problems that arise, and has produced a video supplement. I feel that the video would be useful for those who have never seen aluminum being anodized or would like to see how someone else works. But the video is not altogether necessary; the book alone is filled with over 230 illustrations to explain graphically all of the steps in the process, with 43 color shots of the results.

AAA is filled with all sorts of information including: homemade racking methods, sources for titanium racks, how to get a pH reading to help keep your chemicals at peak performance levels, alternative surface treatments and a few digressions on art, philosophy and life to keep you thinking, amused and inspired.

Most information on anodizing aluminum is produced for and by industry and can get very technical. *AAA* is written for the artist, supplying enough technical information for you to know what you are doing. LaPlantz lists sources for those of us in search of more detailed information. Even though I have been anodizing for three years, I have gained a lot of information from *AAA*. I found it not only helpful for technical information but also inspiring, and I am looking forward to getting back into the studio to try several new variations in my work. If you are anodizing or thinking of starting to anodize aluminum, I feel that *AAA* would be an excellent resource book.

David Baird

***Contemporary Patination*, by Ronald D. Young**
200 pages, $34.95 + 2.50 shipping
Available from Sculpt-Nouveau,
21 Redwood Drive, San Rafael, CA 94901

Remember when copper was orange and brass was yellow? OK, so it's become a little trendy to patina every square centimeter of surface. But, those rich blues and lichen greens are still so appealing. Of course classical sculpture and urban architecture has been familiar with these colors for centuries, but American metalsmiths act as if they just discovered the whole palette. And why not? Except for being a little pretentious, the exuberance does no harm, and the wonderful diversity of color that we're seeing in the field is exhilarating. Now, into this wave of enthusiasm comes a new book on patinas.

Contemporary Patination defies simple classification. In some ways it is a "homemade" book. The type is fuzzy and many of the pages in the appendix have simply been xeroxed. There are a few mispellings. These shortcomings lend the book a certain appeal, giving it an approachable quality that nicely offsets the sometimes forbidding information. And that's where the mix gets unusual, because in some cases the information is more complex and thorough than you'd expect.

The book weighs in at a good two pounds, but the important information accounts for only about a fourth of that. The author presents about three dozen formulas for patinas, and a few for pickles and wax coatings. These are supported by information on preparing the surface and applying the compounds. Instructions are complete and specific, much in the manner of a commonsense cookbook. It's a book I feel comfortable giving to a student.

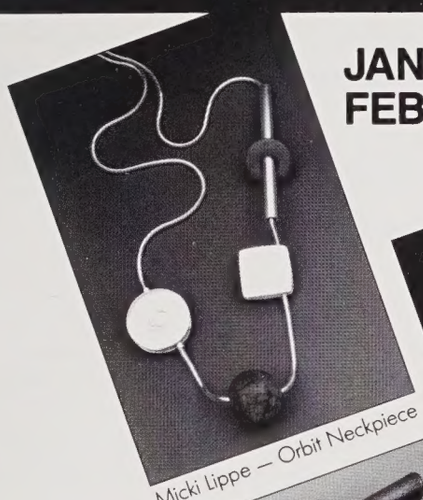
A great deal of the book, perhaps as much as half, falls into the category of support documentation. Young includes sections on selecting respirators and copies of the Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) for all the chemicals being described. These are, of course, available free from suppliers and one can question the wisdom of buying them. At the same time, having them nicely bound in a single volume makes some sense.

Color is introduced into the book in the novel form of three pages of photographic contact prints. I assume that the idea is to present the patina samples as accurately as possible, but I found that the shiny plastic sleeve disrupts the view. A good quality color printing would have been, for me at least, a more satisfying solution.

A couple years ago I reviewed a book called *The Coloring, Bronzing and Patination of Metals* by Richard Hughes and Michael Rowe, published by the British Crafts Council in 1982. It is difficult to avoid comparing this book to that one. The Rowe and Hughes book is vast, comprehensive and scholarly. Without looking at the flyleaf, you know it comes from England, for it exudes a sense of "If we're going to do it, let's bloody well do it right." Young's book, while accurate and sufficient to the general needs of many metalsmiths and sculptors, has a more transient quality. In the case of the former, I was dazzled. In this case I'm satisfied.

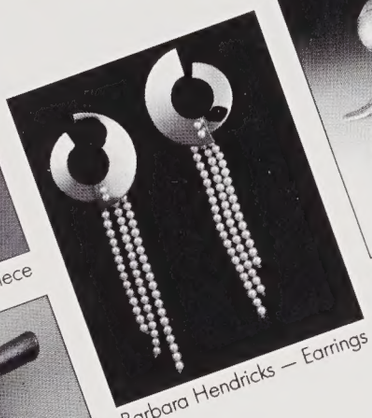
Tim McCreight

NATIONAL INVITATIONAL VALENTINE JEWELRY SHOW

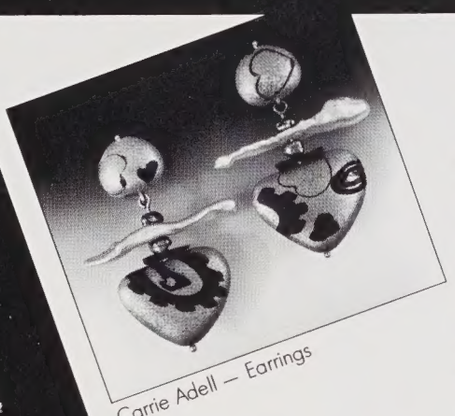


Micki Lippe — Orbit Neckpiece

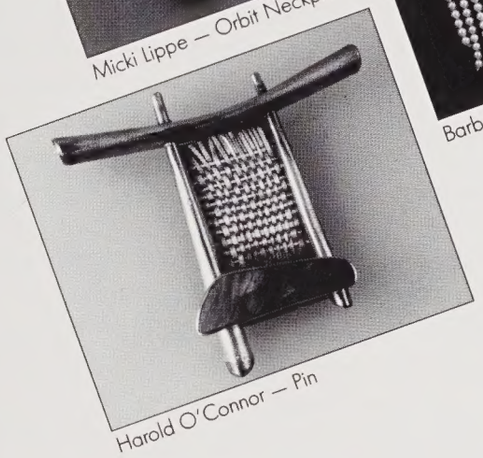
**JANUARY 12-
FEBRUARY 20**



Barbara Hendricks — Earrings



Carrie Adell — Earrings



Harold O'Connor — Pin

Carrie Adell
Patricia Brady
Connie Brauer
Harvey Brody
Zbigniew Chojnacki
Ross Coppelman
Kathleen Dustin
John Heller
Barbara Hendricks
Don Johnson
Micki Lippe
Deborah Marcell
Harold O'Connor
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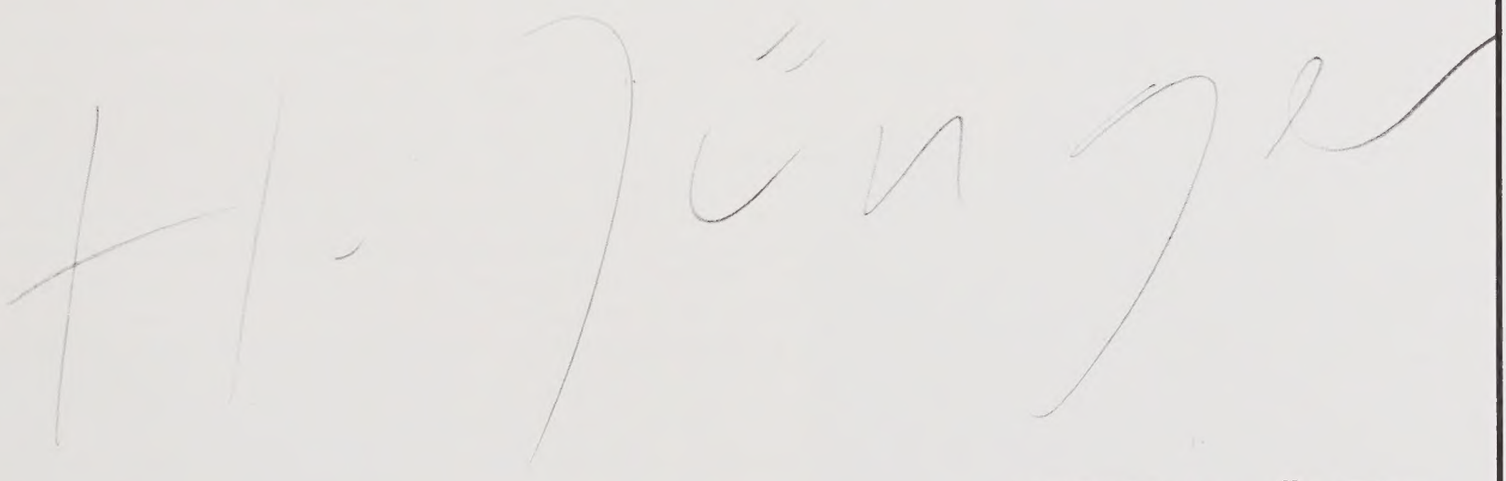

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JEWELERS WERK GALERIE

Ornamenta 1

International exhibition of contemporary jewelry

September 30 – November 19, 1989

Reuchlinhaus, Pforzheim, W. Germany

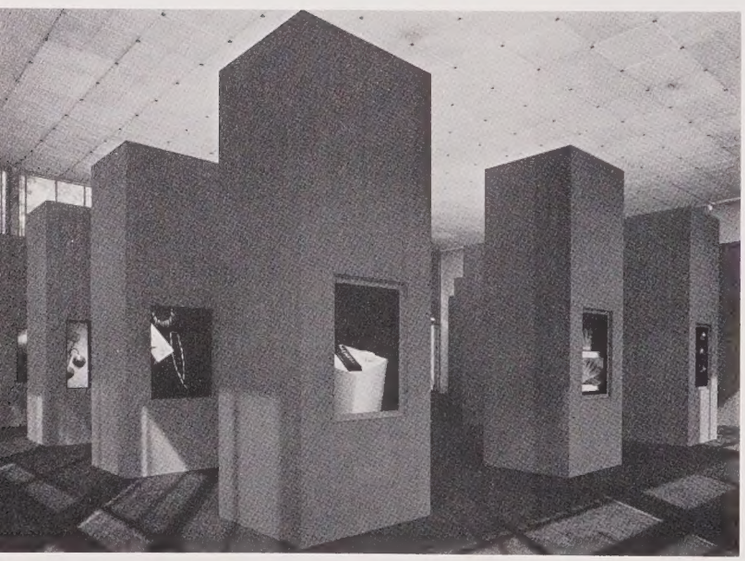
Prospectus

The Expo of jewelry – really an exemplary documentation of contemporary jewelry art – represents not only the essential significance of jewelry and adornment in today's society, but also the artistic qualities of those who currently create jewelry. Consequently, "Ornamenta 1" is a comprehensive representation and examination of today's individualistic lifestyle as well as a presentation of cosmopolitan, highly developed jewelry culture. "Ornamenta 1" will sensitize our awareness of jewelry as well as the individual and social significance of jewelry in our lives.

The place. Pforzheim is, without doubt, the ideal place for such a presentation, for it is the world-renowned and traditional German crystalization point for jewelry production. In addition, Pforzheim has had for many years a world-renowned jewelry museum and one of the oldest and internationally famous schools of design. "Ornamental 1" should emphasize, clarify and broaden their significance.

The concept. "Ornamenta 1" as a world exhibit of contemporary jewelry art will be held in the interest of jewelry and its relationship to people. We are inviting the most important artists and designers in the world to present choice pieces that demonstrate the uniqueness, the diversity of creative possibilities and last, but not least, the psychophysical role of jewelry. An international advisory committee and commissioners from different countries guarantee the authenticity and relevance of the pieces shown.

View of the Massiv Zentral
architect: Prof. Günter Zamp Kelp, West Germany
Photo: Flöter & Kerth



Performances and special happenings in context with jewelry as further highpoints of the program complete this most important part of "Ornamenta 1." Symposia and workshops are planned, accompanied by representatives of heterogeneous artistic and scientific disciplines. A special show especially for the public will add incentive to visit this exhibition – a magnet to attract the media and the public. The various segments of the exhibition are separated according to theme and though situated for the most part in the Reuchlinhaus proper, some of them are spread out over the surrounding park area. New relationships are thereby created. These segments clarify special aspects and respond to individual or social myths.

The significance. "Ornamenta 1" is a magic word articulating substantial needs of people that manifest themselves in the multiforms of adornment. Consequently, these relationships are displayed comprehensively and relevantly and the public is made aware of the complexity, significance and beauty of adornment. Jewelry's strange fascination will be expressed not only vividly but also lucidly.

Press information supplied by "Ornamenta 1."

Anatomy of Ornamenta 1

by Marjan Unger

The number 1, added to "Ornamenta," has a double meaning. It holds the promise that there will be an "Ornamenta" 2, 3 and so on. But it also conveys the idea that Pforzheim is the number 1 city in the world for jewelry design. The spiral, chosen as the logo for this jewelry exhibition, is the visualization of this idea. The same duality goes for "Ornamenta," a derivate from the Latin verb *ornare*, and also an obvious paraphrase of "Documenta," a huge art exposition with which another rather small German town, Kassel, brings itself every four or five years successfully to the forefront of the international avant-garde in the fine arts.

Pforzheim, the state of Baden-Württemberg, is a traditional center for the jewelry and watch industry. More than 70 percent of the German export in these fields comes from its surroundings. Even a famous Paris fashionhouse like Dior had its costume jewelry made in Pforzheim. The city houses a design school and the only museum in the world solely devoted to jewelry, the Reuchlinhaus. Here, between 1967 and 1985, five expositions of modern jewelry were held under the title "Tendenzen." Even in those years the museum showed a strong liking for designs in gold, other precious metals and stones. When the city got a new mayor, Dr. Joachim Becker, one of his foremost ambitions proved to be the filling of the gap in West Germany's prestigious art climate. Although there are several large art expositions, until now there was no comparison in the field of jewelry design.

I arrived on a beautiful November morning in this rather dull and much-bombed city, with some fellow teachers and a group of students from the jewelry department of Amsterdam's Rietveld Academy. In Holland, the tendency to see jewelry design as a way to express ideas not necessarily connected to the body, to use ephemeral materials to protest against the financial status connected with traditional jewelers and to experiment freely with shapes and materials, has come to a turning point. Artists like Robert Smit, Annelies Planteydt and Philip Sajet have been using precious metals for some years and Gijs Bakker, for example, places beautiful stones on his new brooches of photo images laminated in plastic. So the idea of launching "Ornamenta 1" now in the gold city seems to us well chosen.

Birjit Jürgenssen, Vienna, Austria
Drei Fingerlinge, Handschuh mit Schnecken und Schildkröten,
latex, iron, copper, plaster, wax, photograph
Photo: Floter & Kerth

The most eye-catching element of the "Ornamenta 1" was not the work of the 222 participating jewelry designers from 23 countries, but the exhibition installation design by Günter Zamp Kelp, a well-known architect in Germany. The Reuchlinhaus, a very neutral building, was both surrounded and invaded by big, blue columns, in which the exhibits were placed. The concept of the installation might have looked good on paper, but in reality it was too much, especially in the Massiv Zentral section.

This section formed the nucleus of the exhibition. Recent work of more than 90 artists was placed in the blue columns. Through a window you could view the interior of only one display at a time. While not a bad idea, the juxtaposition of the work of several artists within one column was often so discordant that the display's advantage was completely lost.

"Ornamenta 1" was the brainchild of Mayor Dr. Becker, Dr. Falk, director of the jewelry museum and Prof. Lorenzen, head of the jewelry department of the design school in Pforzheim. Responsible for the realization of both the exhibition and the catalog were Dr. Michael Erlhoff, Dr. Fritz Falk, Prof. Jenz-Rüdiger Lorenzen and Wilhelm Mattar, with jewelry designer Sabine Strobel acting as manager. To get a grip on the potential of jewelry artists all over the world, a group of advisers was asked to suggest possible participants from their countries. These were Patricia Anderson – Australia, Christophe Burger – France, Sarah Bodine – USA, Angela Carvalho – Brazil, Renzo Hildenbrand – Switzerland, Marie-Josec van den Hout – Holland, Yasuhiko Ogida – Japan, Jan-L. Opstad – Norway, Ramón Puig Cuyas – Spain, Pamela Ritchie – Canada and Ralph Turner – Great Britain.

Out of all this insight and suggestions generated an exposition divided in many parts. Besides Massiv Zentral was the Ruckblick in die Moderne ab 1960, which included work by leading artists, dating from 1960 to the present from the collection of the jewelry museum. The 100 x 50 x 60 got its title from the measurement of the display cases, in which 26 artists were invited to make an environment for their jewelry, or for jewelry, in general. Unfortunately, most of the contributions were disappointing. Beyond this, many video works were placed more successfully in blue columns in other parts of the building, and especially outside. There was also a small exhibition of designs based on the "Ornamenta" spiral by students from different design schools. Near the café was a gallery annex bookstore, where the innocent visitor was lured to act on his possibly newfound enthusiasm for modern jewelry. One of the most amusing parts of the exhibition was located here. A computer-aided-system was able to take a Polaroid with one of the exhibits in the Massiv Zentral projected on any part of your body.

I still have not mentioned the so-called greatest attraction of the whole exhibition, the Schatzhügel or treasure-dome, a costly structure specially built on the grass in front of the main building. The Schatzhügel was meant to attract the broader public to the exhibition. Here 12 prominent people, like the wife of the president of Baden-Würtemberg, the tennis champion Steffi Graf and the

The History of the Jewelry Museum at Pforzheim

The City of Pforzheim, as the German industrial center of jewels, clocks and watches, is more than any other place predestined to be the site of a special museum, which is the only institution of this kind in the world devoted to demonstrating the history of jewels with due regard to the occidental cultural civilizations.

Thousands of original pieces of jewelry covering a period of more than four-thousand years, from pre-European beginnings to the present, demonstrate a range of artistic and art-handicraft activity which, like no other activity, has an inseparable and personal relation to the human being.

The Jewelry Museum at Pforzheim belongs to the cultural center Reuchlinhaus, which was built in 1961 according to the plans of Manfred Lehmbruck and which bears the name of Pforzheim's favored son, the humanist Johannes Reuchlin (1445-1522).

The basic tenets of the Jewelry Museum at Pforzheim trace back to the collective activities of the Art and Art-Handicraft Association of Pforzheim and Grand-Ducal Arts-and-Crafts School of Baden, today called the Technical College of Design, both of which were founded during the second half of the 19th century. After a short hiatus between the years of 1938 and 1941, the Jewelry Museum was re-established in 1961 under the Municipality of Pforzheim.

Beside its continuing goal of completing and supplementing its collection, the Jewelry Museum at Pforzheim has the essential task of organizing four or five special exhibitions each year. These exhibitions are dedicated to jewelry subjects from the historical, ethnological and modern points of view.

By means of these exhibitions, the Jewelry Museum at Pforzheim serves as "Ambassador of the City of Jewels" in many countries of the world: the Museum has already presented its collection in England, Holland, Belgium, Israel, Czechoslovakia, Japan and Australia.

The Jewelry Museum is supported by the "International Society of the Friends of the Jewellry Museum at Pforzheim," founded in 1977. This society has members in 18 countries all over the world.

Press information supplied by "Ornamenta 1."

Russian clown Oleg Popov showed their favorite piece of jewelry, made for them by prominent artists.

The organization of "Ornament 1" was strongly rooted in local politics and commerce. The organizers saw as their focal point - second only to the question of what fascinates people so much about jewelry - in the role of jewelry as an economic factor, not only for the city of Pforzheim and the region, but also as a German export item for the planned European Common Market. This is the reason why several million German Marks were provided to get "Ornamenta" going. For different reasons, some of them political, a few leading German jewelry artists dissociated themselves from this exhibition, like Hermann Jünger, Otto Künzli and Gerd Rothmann. However, because their work in the permanent collection of the Pforzheim Jewelry Museum was shown in the Rückblick in Die Moderne, their names do appear on the list of the 222 participants.

All-in-all, "Ornamenta" is a powerful addition to the growing list of exhibitions of contemporary jewelry. The scale is impressive, but, alas, a lot of good work put together with the help of a lot of money does not always do a lot of good for the profession. Only the division into several parts gave a structure to the exhibition.

The overall impression was of a strict organization, with a lot of money and attention given to the installation with little room for the ideas of the participating artists. In comparison to sculpture, for example, jewelry can rather easily been mailed to any place on the world. However, that is no excuse to strip jewelry from its context, its roots. The lack of a broad insight, of showing tendencies and meanings, was especially apparent in the Massiv Zentral, where the contrast between the pieces was so big, it was devastating. Of course, the true believer could find a lot of fine work in the Massiv Zentral.

Recent work of quality, and preferably new work, were the criteria for the selection by the organizers. The national backgrounds of the artists were also considered. Although some of the best West German jewelry artists refused to participate, there was still a strong body of work from West Germany. Especially good in the use of metals, often in combination with other materials, is the work of Georg Dobler, Martina Döbereiner, Anna Fraling, Beate Gänssle, Daniel Kruger, Rainer Schnepf, Detlef Thomas and Justine Wein. A surprise from West Germany was Patrik Muff. His brooches with traditional German saying as titles are pure punk blended with baroque; silver and gold combines with all sorts of stones and an ivory skull or a bone. The Dutch were also well represented in the Massiv Zentral, about ten participants, varying from a series of well-proportioned silver rings of Onno Boekhoudt to the big, colorfully painted pvc-neckpieces of Beppe Kessler. The work of Esther Knobel from Israel, Kai Chan from Canada, Peter Chang from Scotland, Gry Eide and Tone Vigeland from Norway and Carlier Makigawa was not exactly new, but is always good to see again. Work from the leading Spanish artist is known by way of the beautiful catalog *Joieria Europea Contemporània* from 1987, and even exhibitions of Japanese jewelry and body-related work have been held in the Netherlands and other countries in Europe. In Pforzheim, the Japanese work, with the carefully chosen, often subdued use of materials, like the thin bamboo in transparent pvc of Kazuhiro Itoh or the greenish copper in thin paper by Tatsuo Kawaguchi, showed beautiful restraint of form.

There was not much jewelry from France but the voluptuous rings from Henri Gargat were one of the few pleasant surprises in Pforzheim. The same goes for the mushroom necklace by Dorothea Prühl from East Germany, work that made you wonder what more has happened behind the Iron Curtain, the curtain that now is no more. The big paper pieces of Tone Fink from Austria were exceptional in size, but obscure as to meaning. "Ornamenta 1" was accompanied by a substantial catalog. Although the first impression is good – a heavy book with some good articles and all the work of the Massiv Zentral reproduced in color, it lacks the same element as the exhibition itself: no real information about the meanings behind the work, no room for the ideas of the artists themselves, only facts, like date of birth, country, exhibitions, sizes of the work and use of materials.

One last point about the Massiv Zentral. The biggest unknown body of work in "Ornamenta 1," was that from the United States. In Holland we have seen the work of Marjorie Schick and Lisa Gralnick, but I would like to see much more of the work of John Iversen, Robert Ebendorf, Thomas Gentille and Bruce Metcalf, for example. Like all the other participants, they were represented with four to six pieces, and that really is not enough to get a good idea about an artist's ideas or potentials. Conclusion: something should be done about this. One Dutch museum, the Kruithuis, in 's Hertogenbosch, has started the preparations of an exhibition of contemporary jewelry design from the United States.

For me the nicest part of "Ornamenta 1" was the Rückblick in die Moderne. In Holland, in 1987 a broad survey of Dutch jewelry design was shown, dating from 1945 to 1987. There was not much to show from the 40s, for obvious reasons, and not much from the 50s either. The Rückblick in die Moderne thus covered about the same period, the 60s, 70s and 80s, but you cannot imagine a more different approach. The Jewelry Museum in Pforzheim has never wavered from its policy to buy and show "real" jewelry, that is, precious metals and stones, whatever else

Structure of the Exhibit

The theme and task of "Ornamenta 1" at first seem to be in conflict. The intimacy of artistically and technically valuable miniatures stands in contrast to the conceptual openness of a "World's Fair" of jewelry. In this case, the need for spatial intimacy as prerequisite for the presentation of jewelry requires an element which transcends existing boundaries. The structural framework for the exhibit grew out of these considerations and the limitations of the space available. And so there are 80 segments in which various forms of jewelry are presented in different manners. These segments are divided into six to ten types, and in material and optical appearance are so designed as to create the impression of a formal and functional relationship. The segments are arranged according to emphasis throughout the building and at times seem to pervade the existing structure of the Reuchlinhaus. Some are situated in front, near the entrance area, still others grace the open spaces facing the Nagold river.

The structural homogeneity of the various segments gives birth to the generous framework for a concept that at first glance seems to cheerfully disregard the designated premises thereby fulfilling the requirement of a cosmopolitan outlook.

Günter Zamp Kelp (Haus-Rucker) was the architect of "Ornamenta 1" and has previously participated in "Documenta."

Far left
Steven Fong, Vancouver, Canada
Inside/Outside, shoulder jewelry, copper patinated
16 x 6 cm

Left
Tone Fink, Vienna, Austria
Achselzuchgewand, paper and tape
160 x 95 cm, 10 cm deep
Photo: Flöter & Kerth

happened in the field. You can criticize them for that, and see "Ornamenta" as a coup to catch up with other aspects of jewelry design. On the other hand, you can be grateful. Where else can you see such a lot of more or less precious pieces from leading figures like the two great German teachers, Hermann Jünger and Friedrich Becker, or from the illustrious Italians, like Giampaolo Babetto, Francesco Pavan and Arnoldo Pomodoro.

This revealing view of the last three decades makes you wonder if your own background can be a burden when you visit an exhibition like "Ornamenta 1." Surely, it is difficult to imagine how the broader public benefits from such a wide confrontation with modern jewelry design.

The Jewelry Museum in Pforzheim was also able to show some very good pieces of jewelry by famous painters or sculptors, like Max Ernst, Pablo Picasso, Hans Arp, Man Ray, Niki de Saint Phalle and Arman. They didn't show pieces by Braque and Calder. Those relatively few pieces of Ernst, Man Ray and the others made clear that fine artists can make beautiful jewelry, strong pieces that are related to their fine art and are, all the same, wearable items that betray a point of view on jewelry. These works, however, don't open the way to declare jewelry design to be a fine art. Despite the obvious comparison with "Documenta," "Ornamenta 1" was nothing more or less than a celebration of jewelry.

The 25 showcases 100 x 50 x 60 could have been the means to draw jewelry in a broader context and to bridge the gap to sculpture and even architecture. Despite the good reputations of most of the participants, this part of the exhibition formed a most disappointing experience. A dark room, with a lot of cases that didn't show! The ideas of the artist worked much better in the catalog, where the installations are shown in parts or in a much wider context than 100 x 50 x 60.

Even more disappointing was the Schatzhügel. One of the inherent values of jewelry design is its relation to the human body, and even more specifically to a personality. With the growing amount of jewelry exhibitions, jewelry is regarded more and more as objects independent of a human framework. On paper the Schatzhügel must have looked like a good vehicle to overcome the impersonality of jewelry presentations. But in the specially built dome, all you found was a peepshow with an indifferent display of very different objects. The main criticism is, however, that there was almost no communication between the artist and the "famous" people they were coupled with. Steffi Graf didn't even try on the sturdy leather jacket covered with brooches by Robert Lee Morris from the United States. Ruudt Peters, from Holland, who made an object called Prometheus for Philip Rosenthal, from the ceramics industry of the same name, commented on his work: "I want to say nothing about Mr. Rosenthal because I have not gotten to know him personally, so I can't say anything. I think the work I made for him speaks for itself." Although Ruudt Peters tried very hard to get in contact with Mr. Rosenthal, he was only allowed a 10-minute telephone call, which was hardly worthwhile. Esther Knobel from Israel made the right choice to see mountaineering as a metaphor in her piece for Reinhold Messner. May be the same metaphoric approach is behind the strong Torus neckpiece by British jewelry David Watkins for Boris Becker. Gijs Bakker, very cleverly convinced the organizers of "Ornamenta 1" to make a brooch for Hans van Manen, a Dutch choreographer and photographer. His piece, and the object of Patrik Muff for the actor Klaus Maria Brandauer, showed a personal element that worked.

During our stay in Pforzheim we visited the big jewelry department of the Pforzheim Design School. It is much better equipped than the Rietveld Academy, with a lot of students from other countries, just as in Amsterdam. Jewelry students apparently do travel. We also went to the nearest big town, Stuttgart, to see the still new extension of the Staatsgallerie, designed by the English architect James Stirling. On our way home, we could have stopped in almost every major German town to see a good modern art collection, to see some adventurous new architecture and a specialized museum.

In such a rich cultural climate, putting new emphasis on contemporary jewelry design is worthwhile. However difficult all that prestige involved is to swallow, the initiative of the city of Pforzheim deserves support. The outcome of the first "Ornamenta" has given both visitors and organizers much to consider. In my opinion, and those of the jewelry artists to whom I spoke, for the next "Ornamenta" there can be much more exchange of ideas between organizers and participants – maybe fewer individual pieces next time, and more room for each piece, and, above all, more room for a relevant context.

Marjan Unger, who lives in Bussum, near Amsterdam, is an art historian, specializing in 20th-century design (fashion, jewelry, ceramics, graphic design and industrial design), and a lecturer at the Rietveld Academy in Amsterdam. For nine years she has been editor of a Dutch design magazine, as well as a magazine writer and exhibition organizer.

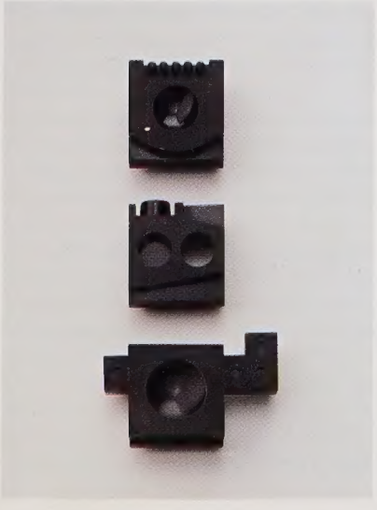
Scope of the Exhibition

The exhibition is laid out in several sections. The "Museum" presents a historical review of contemporary jewelry, from 1960 to the present. This section contains material from the Jewelry Museum in Pforzheim as well as material borrowed from other collections. The "Massiv Zentral," the center point of the exhibition, displays individual jewelry pieces. Works from over 100 jewelers from 18 different countries is shown. Under the title "100x50x60," 25 jewelers, artists and architects have put on their own installations in 25 separate showcases. A video section further develops the theme of ornamentation by showing videos of different forms of "bejeweling," the techniques of jewelrymaking, examining the creation of jewelry designs and exploring the role that video-art can play in jewelry. This section also serves as a forum for the exhibition visitors to explore with the assistance of electronics the world of ornamentation. In front of the Reuchlinhaus is the "Schatzhugel," the "Treasure Mound." In it will be displayed the favorite object of well-known persons. On display with those are also pieces of contemporary jewelry, specifically commissioned for them by "Ornamenta."

"Ornamenta 1", through activities, jewelry displays and photography, examines the concepts of ornamentation. There is at the same time a program of workshops, jewelry fashion shows and performances.

"Ornamenta I" has been organized and managed by Sabine Strobel. The "Ornamenta" Art Committee was established to plan and oversee the concept of the exhibition. They selected the participants of the show with the assistance of 11 international advisors.

Information taken from the "Ornamenta 1" tourist brochure.



Lisa Gralnick, USA
***three brooches,* each black acrylic**
4,5 cm x 4,5 cm
Photo: Flöter & Kerth

American Participants

Jamie Bennett
Catherine Butler
James Lee Byars
Robert Ebendorf
Eva Eisler
Ed Emshwiller
Susan Ewing
Arline Fisch
Thomas Gentille
Lisa Gralnick
John Iversen
Stanley Lechtzin
Roy Lichtenstein
Bruce Metcalf
Robert Lee Morris
Alicia Nogueira
Hiroko and
Gene Pijanowski
Man Ray
Majorie Schick
Michael Tomlinson
Joe Wood

November 2, 1989

Dear Sarah,

I have been recently influenced by Huxley and Rilke. The casual flow of their letters as they record ideas and memories made me realize that I did not wish to write about "Ornamenta 1" in the traditional critical manner. For me, the journey to "Ornamenta," my first visit to the Schmuckmuseum in Pforzheim, was prompted by the need to see Manfred Bischoff.

"Ornamenta" actually began for me on the 28th of September. Arriving at the airport, I then made a studio visit with Claus Bury and a fast trip to the Museum für Kunsthandwerk in Frankfurt designed by Richard Meier. It was interesting to note that only one major piece of contemporary jewelry was on view at that museum – a work by Hermann Jünger. Sarah, as I walked through the ramps of the building and looked toward the river, the Meier structure strongly reminded me of Michael Scott's house from the early 20th century, built in Sandycove, Dublin, overlooking the bay and next to Joyce's famous Martello Tower. What does this all have to do with "Ornamenta"? The layers of visual influence in some way affect one's perception en route to an historical occasion.

I was slightly bemused that I befriended Barbara and Peter Chang at the Frankfurt train station when I recognized his bracelet on her wrist. Subsequently, the ride to Pforzheim was filled with opening his cases, looking at his work, and listening, as he explored the technical procedures necessary to the development of those large plastic baubles. The intensity and juxtaposition of primary colors were much closer to the esthetic of a native Southern Californian than to a man who was born in Liverpool and worked in Glasgow. The bracelets reminded me of the amusement parks that populated the Western world during the 1930s and 1940s – a kind of controlled vulgarity.

"Ornamenta" as an occasion began in the town hall. As my taxi neared the building, I glimpsed Bob Ebendorf and Jamie Bennett having coffee and conversation on a side street. I stood in the large plaza in front of the town hall and was immediately greeted by Ruth and Max Frohlich, walking in tandem over the bridge. The history which is "Ornamenta" had already begun. It is not quite 10:30 in the morning and the gathering of the "clan" from all over the continent, the United States and Japan was in progress. It was almost like being at a family wedding. Carla and Bruno Martinazzi, Yasuki Hiramatsu, Francisco Pavan, Marta Breis, Miriam Sharlin, Kai Chan, Elizabeth Defner, Paul Derrez, Gijs Bakker, Lous Martin, Robert Lee Morris, Charon Kransen, Eva Eisler, Ebbe Weiss, E.R. Nele, Erico Nagai, Heidi Sand, Marjorie Schick, Peter Skubic, Josef Symon, Tone Vigeland – everyone greeting and kissing each other in the most familiar way.

European exhibitions are usually preceded by ceremonies filled with speeches, performances and concerts. This exhibition brought together all three: the grand welcome by the mayor and dignitaries from neighboring states/provinces; a keynote speech by Dr. Michael Erlhoff from Frankfurt; and a concert and dance performance by Noam Ben-Jacov from Amsterdam, whose body movements were choreographed with an overscaled linear element rather than a companion. The speeches lauded the effort of the jewelry industry, while the Burger-meister, wearing his medieval chain of authority, proudly observed his audience. The orchestra played onorous music – no sound for the rampages that stifled one of the greatest creative and intellectual moments in history with the dismissal of Max Ernst, Gropius, Einstein, Kahler, Wildenhain, Natzlers, Mies van de Rohe, Walter Kaufman. I kept waiting for Fritz Falk to address us, but he remained a member of the audience. My romantic sense had him leading us all to the Reichlinhaus. However, the ceremony ended with a reception and conversation in the foyer.

As we left the Town Hall and began to slowly promenade toward the museum, I was moved by the moment – the sense of something pending. Banners were flying at the entrance and to the left of the path was a manmade mound rising from the earth like a pyramid. It was covered with sod and housed the exhibition of works made for 10 selected celebrities who, in return selected 10 artists to commission personal works for them. It was almost like entering Lenin's tomb or the building erected for the Dead Sea Scrolls at the Israel Museum. The favorite ornamental possession of each "star" was exhibited with the commissioned work of each artist. Frankly, I would have understood it better had the "stars" been from our ranks.

However, there they were and I made the grand mistake of referring to the pyramid as the bunker. Lagerfeld had rejected the work submitted by Kai Chan and insisted that another work be commissioned in its stead; and therefore, there is also an object for him by Beate Ganssle. Among the other artists who were invited to participate in this section were Gijs Bakker, Esther Knobel, Falko Marx, Robert Lee Morris, Norbert Muerrle, Patrick Muff, Ruudt Peters, Paul Preston, Verena Sieber Fuchs, and David Watkins.

It was difficult to concentrate on looking at work. The distraction of being with people whom you rarely see was everywhere. As one left the pyramid, the path which led to the museum portals was lined with free-standing ultramarine constructed columns, which held video screens offering images of gems and nature. The drama of presentation had begun. It was like a set for the opera. The paraphenalia associated with contemporary marketing was everywhere...first-day-issue stamps and envelopes, t-shirts, shopping bags, candies, matches, all with the symbol of "Ornamenta 1" – the spiral impregnated on every surface. In fact, Sarah, as I drove into Pforzheim from a nearby village, the Spiral was heralded above the highway.

The architectural theme of ultramarine, columns continued into the main galleries, which housed the invited section of the exhibition. The exhibition installation dominated the works within the "theme of sacrifice" was moved into the courtyard, where videos were also contained within a rock installation site sculpture. I found myself wondering how I was going to absorb everything: the works from the invited section, the video presentations, the historical section, the diaramas and the students' response to the spiral as the theme of "Ornamenta," plus – Galerie für "Ornamenta 1" organized by Paul Derrez and Rosemarie Brodhag, which caused a controversial furor among the dealers in our field. Can you imagine the Museum of Modern Art giving Castelli and Pace the authorization to be the only official galleries for the international sculpture and painting exhibitions on the premises at 53rd Street? Actually there were controversies everywhere. Hermann Jünger circulated a letter during the opening day informing his peers of his disapproval of "Ornamenta" – "Ornamenta" is not "Documenta" and should not be confused with that event. He and most of the Munich goldsmiths boycotted that exhibition via attendance and invited participation. However, works from the museum's permanent collection represented selected boycotting artists. Peter Skubic, who was not included historically and rejected the invitation, created a t-shirt entitled "Hier Fehlt Schmuck." Selected members of the European metal community rejected the occasion because of deep intellectual principles concerning the organization of the exhibition. The seriousness of these issues should not be denied, but the spirit of togetherness and the rare opportunity for dialogue and comraderie should not be dismissed.

Diaramas lined the wall like a precious aquarium. This invitational section responded to the concept of "Ornamenta" with the creation of small-scale, three-dimensional works. Of the 21 diaramas in this section, the weakest was by Hans Hollein, whose installation looked like a bad window display for social jewelry. I was moved by Jurgen Brodwolf's work entitled Numerierun, numbers impressed on plastic corpses which were layered in the case and referred to the Holocaust. These numbers branded on symbolic human flesh represent ornamentation. Among the critically significant diaramas for me were the installations by Wolfgang Rahs, Sinje Dillenkofer, Wolfgang Lieglein (Wolli the Kid), Hubertus Von Skal, Ulrich Teige and Timm Ulrichs.

Of primary importance were the event and the people. Second was the value of being able to study works in the "historical section," which I had only known from photographic documentation. As a critical examination, it concentrated on German artists and forgot Israel, Belgium, Canada, Spain, the United States, Mexico and Japan. Perhaps it should have been entitled "Selected Works from the Collection of the Schmuckmuseum and a Few Private Collectors." An attempt to explore the field internationally failed – the U.S. was represented by Lechtzin and Fisch. Where were De Patta, Woell, Craver, Moty, Skoogfors, Prip, Radokovich, Miller, etc.? Where were Ferdinand Demaret and Emile Souply from Belgium, and Bianca Eshel Gershuni from Israel? The inconsistencies in the historical selection process were massive. Italy was well represented with Pinton, Pavan, Martinazzi and then Babetto; England with Flöckinger, Watkins and Ramshaw.

Sarah, I know you were the American advisor for the contemporary section and I had great trouble with the American selection. It is important to me that as professional and personal friends we can converse freely. Is it true that your recommendations were changed by another committee? Europe does not know American work. Curatorial selections cannot be controlled, but, as advisors, we have the responsibility to find a way to acquaint the continent with strong work as well as work that expresses a sensibility absent in their culture. It concerns me when "the stars of politics'" work enters history because they are adept at controlling committees, influencing museums and traveling. I shall say no more.

Here's the movie – now you can read the book – if you can find a translator. I must say that the research documentation was weak, considering the effort the galleries and many artists made in preparing selected chronologies and bibliographies; however, it is great to have the photos and the essays.

In the kindest way, it is like a Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey circus – an extravaganza as an event, but some of the selected acts were not ready for the center ring. The event and architectural installation overshadowed the works but it was great that it happened and important to be there. We must work harder for America. We need our singular voices to be heard as strongly as theirs – can't we have a Pforzheim here?

Carpe Diem!

Helen

Helen W. Drutt English is Director of the Helen Drutt Gallery, New York/Philadelphia

The Economics of Ornamenta 1

Finally, On September 30th, 1989, it will happen: "Ornamenta l" opens its gates in Pforzheim at and around the "Reuchlinhaus." For 50 days, visitors from all over the world will then have the opportunity to get an insight into the fascinating variety of the contemporary jewelry. The novel conception of the public-attracting idea of the "treasure-dome" as well as an architecture specific to the exhibition, a cubic system of division designed to evoke a new experience of the feeling of space take this variety into account. More than 200 artists from more than 20 nations participate. A fringe program and many spectacular events place the whole of Pforzheim under the banner of the "Ornamenta 1." I am convinced that the "Ornamenta" will not only generate cultural but also economic impulses. These will increase the competitive position of the Pforzheim jewelry and watch industry on the world market. The assumption of the patronage by Ministerpräsident Dr. h.c. Lothar Späth, the promotion of the exhibition by the state of Baden-Württemberg and the generous support from the local, regional and supra-regional enterprises illustrate a close attachment to this project. Although "Ornamenta 1," as a world exhibition of the contemporary jewelry, primarily presents a cultural and social event, its economic effects are not less important: The budget of the city of Pforzheim officially calls "Ornamenta 1" a project of economic support. The body responsible for the exhibition is the "working pool 'Ornamenta'," combining the City of Pforzheim with the regional enterprises represented by the chamber of trade and commerce Nordschwarzwald, the chamber of handcrafts, important federations of the industry and the Polytechnic Institute of Design. Due to an assessment issued by the Ministry of Economy, medium-sized firms and technology and the Industrial Board of State, the state of Baden-Württemberg granted financial support. All this signifies the importance and scope of "Ornamenta 1" as a factor of economic promotion. There is good reason for this: First, the concept of "Ornamenta" should be mentioned, as it by far surpasses a traditional international exhibition of jewelry: On the one hand, it stands for an avant-garde artistic and cultural event of high level, on the other hand, it is in no way of interest to the insider only. The to some extent spectacular elements of experience of "Ornamenta 1" are designed to attract and inspire the whole public. Thus, Pforzheim, as the site of the exhibition, has the chance towards the end of this decade to present itself in clear outline as a city, competent in all matters concerning taste and fashion, one of which trendsetting ideas for design derive. Important messages of "Ornamenta" convey the power of innovation and production of the whole economic region around Pforzheim – center of the German jewelery and watch industry, but also a location of renown high-tech enterprises and other dynamic sectors. It can be anticipated that "Ornamenta 1" will in many respects produce an economic thrust. "Ornamenta" will also influence the production of jewelry and the related sectors, e.g., fashion, cosmetics, accessories and watches, by helping the jewelry market to more security and stability and by setting standards to the growing interest of the public. Regarding the individual enterprises, these impulses could find consideration in the design of products and their marketing. Finally, "Ornamenta 1" offers many possibilities for all enterprises wishing to excel by their creativity and modern design of products on a national or international level. With regard to the coming European Common Market, all measures will gain importance that are suitable to differentiate oneself from one's competitors. This applies to the enterprises of consumer goods as well as to the producers of capital goods and services. Enterprises associating with "Ornamenta" upgrade themselves by displaying their own creativity and enthusiasm towards innovations. The effectiveness of advertising of "Ornamenta" is to be highly rated, especially since this demanding event is planned to be repeated every three years with changing emphasis. Altogether, "Ornamenta 1" will not only be a cultural and social highlight but also an economic event.

Dr. Joachim Becker
Mayor of the City of Pforzheim

Press information supplied by "Ornamenta 1."

An Open letter to Those Responsible for "Ornamenta 1"

" 'Ornamenta l' – the World's Fair of Jewelry – a truly exemplary documentation of contemporary artistic jewelry..." "Ornamenta – a magic word which articulates humanity's substantial needs..." "Steffi Graf and Katarina Witt are coming to Ornamenta..." "a treasure trove bursting with the favorite jewels of the most famous people of their times..." "What 'Documenta' is for Kassel, that's what 'Ornamenta' will be for Pforzheim."

The list of sensationalist slogans that can be culled from "Ornamenta" publications and press releases in the daily newspapers can be extended indefinitely: the tone of this public relations material is tasteless, presumptuous and unmitigatedly provincial. Are the wares you have to offer really so bad that you must stoop to using the language of ad writers, third-rate salesmen and marketing brokers, art directors and creative know-it-alls, surfers of fashion and blithering consumerists?

Still another item of misinformation direct from the "Ornamenta" advertising machine: "214 artists from 23 countries have agreed to participate in 'Ornamenta 1'." This is simply not true. The truth is that many artists not only never agreed to participate, but expressly refused to take part in "Ornamenta 1." Among those who declined are Hermann Jünger, Manfred Bischoff, Gerd Rothmann and myself. Some of our works, and no doubt works by other artists as well, were displayed at "Ornamenta" as part of the "Retrospective: Modernism since 1969" show, but since these objects were already part of the Pforzheim Jewelry Museum's permanent collection, we cannot prevent their display at "Ornamenta." But, to conclude – as was claimed in writing, that the presence of jewelry by the approximately 60 artists whose works are being displayed in the "Retrospective" constitutes acceptance by those artists of the invitation to participate in "Ornamenta 1" is not only inexact and misleading, it is also unfair, untrue and rather sneaky.

For the sake of completeness, let us also remark that Robert Smit, Peter Skubic, Manfred Nisselmüller and Bernhard Schobinger have also refused to take part in "Ornamenta 1." Despite these artists refusals, it is difficult to understand why works of theirs in the Museum's permanent collection were not put on display in the "Retrospective" show alongside the works of other contemporary jewelers. If theses works are not already part of the Museum's permanent collection, it is high time they were acquired, since for decades they have numbered among the best and finest in the world of jewelry.

"214 participants..." also means, according to a very rough calculation, that "Ornamenta 1" must include nearly one-thousand individual objects. Mass events like this are nothing new, but they continue to appall and depress me. It is simply impossible to comprehend and digest such a mountain of stuff. Nor are there 200 truly first-class jewelry makers, and even if there were, many of them wouldn't be caught dead showing their work at this exhibition anyway...

This embarrassing, sycophantic and unseemingly ogling at major artistic events in Kassel and elsewhere might have served some useful purpose if the "Ornamenta" organizers had realized that an increasingly large number of painters, sculptors and other artists are turning away from mass events and are vociferously making their objections known. A short selection from Donald Judd's "Fight of the Exhibition Curators" (excerpted from *Kunstforum* magazine, vol. 100, p492 ff) should make this clear, although in this case (and only in this case), please substitute the word "jewelry" for "art" and the title of the current mass event "Ornamenta" for "Bilderstreit," the megashow Judd was discussing in his article: " 'Bilderstreit' (Duelling Images) is no more nor less than the institutionalization of art as big business. Business is indeed big, and art comes up with a rather small share in the proceeds. But 'small is beautiful,' as the saying goes. Mega-exhibitions and giant collections are attempts to prove that it is ultimately possible to institutionalize art, that art is ok, and that art isn't really subversive...So what could be more appropriate than these mass art auctions, mammoth exhibitions and big collections finally, actually changing the nature of art itself? Where will we be then? A new, neo-reactionary art for the masses is of no use to anyone. But it's quite obvious that that's just the sort of art being manufactured today...In order to raise the funds necessary for a mega-exhibition...one must appeal to the public good, and that means, one panders to kitsch and so-called artistic good taste. But good taste is always a fake. The public is taught to understand art the way the mega-exhibition's organizers understand it, and the organizers are always concerned with what's fashionable and trendy, as we can see in 'Bilderstreit.' The best artworks of any period can never be shown in such exhibitions. Organizers prefer to feature the works they like; for them, art is a 'scene,' a free-for-all field in which events of all sorts can take place regardless of their quality...How can such a situation help educate the public's ability to make intelligent aesthetic judgments? It's unpleasant enough to stand in one of those over-filled rooms where no one seems to be able to differentiate between good and bad. The artworks seem to be all heaped up indiscriminately anyway. In such surroundings, audiences are taught to view art in conditions diametrically opposed to those under which artworks really ought to be beheld. "

The exhibition of "Jewelry: Signs on the Body" in Linz, Austria, 1987, could also have served as a warning. Already then the sonorous names of illustrious designers, architects and other artists failed to live up to the expectations they evoked. Or is the public really expected to believe that works like Hollein's boring jewelry-monstrosities in fact bear any relation to either good jewelry or any other artform for that matter? And now the peak of tastelessness has been achieved with this unspeakable "treasure trove" of jewelry by the "most famous people of our times."

The "Ornamenta" catalog claims that the "Artists Adorn the Stars" show returns the individual human being to his/her rightful place at the center of things. I disagree: nothing, and I mean absolutely nothing, occupies the center stage at "Ornamenta 1" except media hype, sham and unalloyed vanity.

Otto Künzli, Munich, W. Germany

English translation courtesy *Art Aurea*.

"Ornamenta," an obvious allusion to "Documenta" is an embarrassment. It seeks to curry favor, all the while limping lamely behind its namesake. Likewise, the "treasure trove for the stars' favorite pieces" makes me sad. They say, "the ends justify the means." I say, "everything has its price." For example, the sacrifice of originality, seriousness, credibility. *Therefore*: I never agreed to participate in "Ornamenta" (although the contrary has appeared in print). I have, in fact, *expressly refused* to participate. This has always been, and continues to be, my position. Some of my works are being shown in "Retrospective: Modernism since 1969"; these pieces are already owned by the museum and their disposition is beyond my control.

Hermann Jünger,
Munich, W. Germany

Permission to reprint this letter courtesy *Art Aurea*, where it originally appeared.

My artistic beliefs, my work, how and what I have attempted and accomplished over the years, the fruits of which one might call my stance: all these compel me to explain my distance from "Ornamenta." I can discover no common ground between the loud, spectacular 2.5 million DM "Ornamenta" conception and my own rather quiet, exploratory investigations. From where I stand as an artist, I have no choice but to oppose this kind of commercialization and sensationalism.

My motivation for making casts of the human body and then using these molds in an ornamental fashion derived from my desire to expand and develop the notion of "jewelry." But what at first had served a predominantly conceptual function has proved itself through years of practical work in jewelrymaking to be most capable of evolving. The creation not of sensationalist but of essential objects has always been my goal. Whether or not I have been successful in that endeavor is a matter for others, and for the future, to decide.

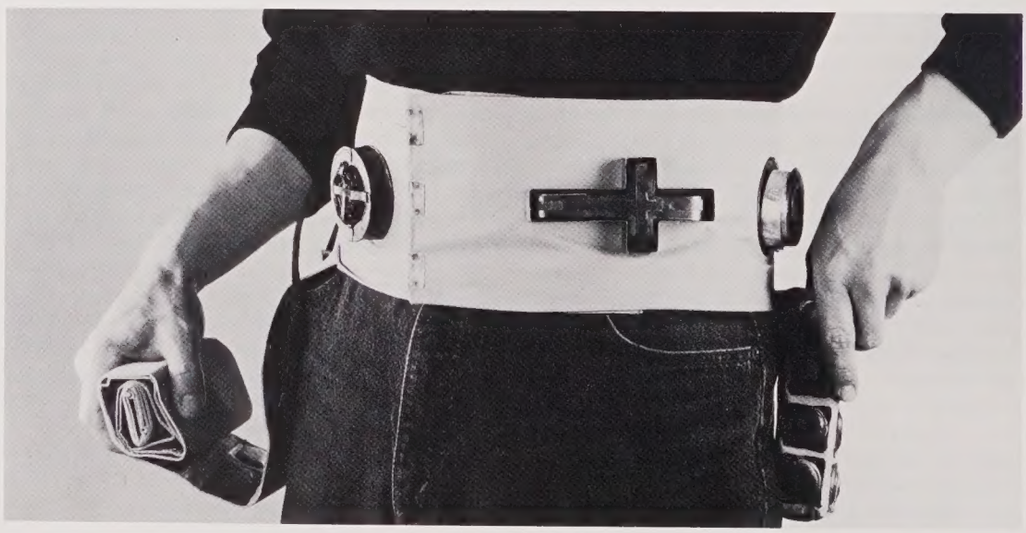
Two years ago, as part of an assignment for students at the Hochschule in Vienna, I posed the problem of creating "Jewelry for a Particular Person." I wasn't interested in obvious solutions, which simplistically pair a particular object with a corresponding person; instead, I wanted the students to take on the challenging task of the applied arts in general: the attempt to unify the person and decor. To succeed at this, the students needed to rethink old assumptions and abandon their cozy, familiar notions of what jewelry is all about. The wearer as a unique individual with his special constellation of physical and psychological attributes became the most important factor. Only then, after all thought of jewelrymaking had been forgotten, could jewelry begin to be made. The students discovered strikingly original ways to include the wearer in the new jewelry they created. I have recounted this long history because I too have been asked to take part in the project "Artists Adorn the Stars." But I would be untrue to the discriminating, demanding and sophisticated assignment I gave at the Hochschule in Vienna if I were to participate in this public relations stunt at the Museum in Pforzheim.

In preparing the concept for "Ornamenta," far too little thought has been given to the artists. In the hunt for spectacular attractions, considerations of quality have been allowed to fall by the wayside.

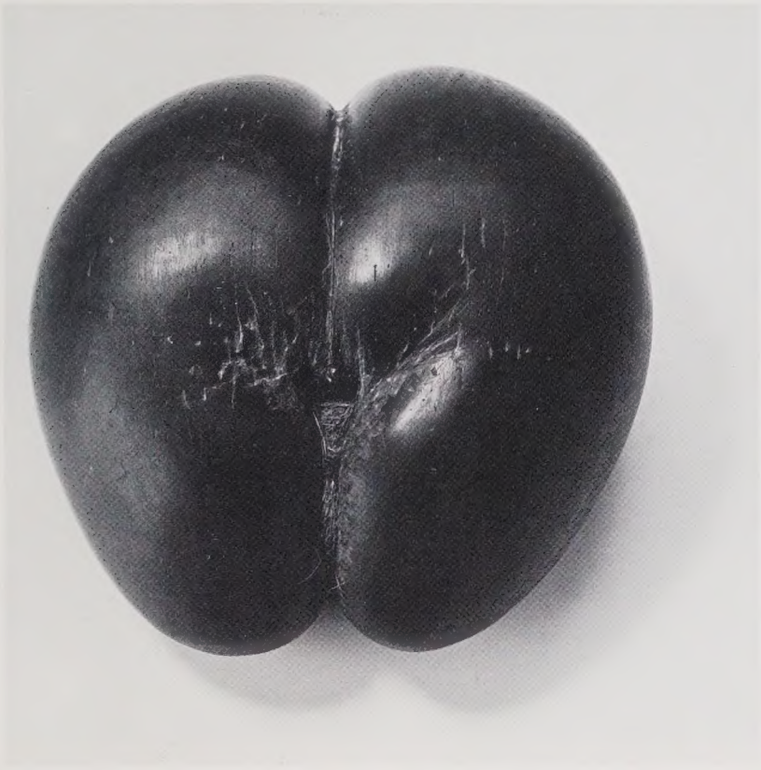
Gerd Rothmann
West Germany
Permission to reprint this letter courtesy of *Art Aurea*, where it originally appeared.

Far left
Peter Chang, Glasgow, Scotland
Bracelet
various plastics, 16,5 cm d., Photo: Flöter & Kerth

Left
Friedrich Becker, Düsseldorf, West Germany
Bracelet
gold, lapis-lazuli, chrysoprase, 1969, Photo: Günter Meyer



Right
Esther Knobel, Jerusalem, Israel
Waistband and Sash
for Reinhold Messner, famous mountaineer,
nylon, nickel, brass, copper, total length 107 cm
Photo: Flöter & Kerth



Hans van Manen, Amsterdam, Holland
Coco de Mer, Nut from the Seychelles
Photo: Flöter & Kerth

"Ornamenta 1" Catalog

A lavish catalog provides a document
for the "Ornamenta 1" exhibition.
Published in Germany by Prestel Verlag,
the catalog includes approximately
320 illustrations, most in color, on 320 pages.
The catalog texts are in German only.
For further information, contact:
Prestel Verlag
Mandlstrasse 26,
D-8000 Munich 40, West Germany

Jewelry is Art or Jewelry or Art is Jewelry is Jewelry is Art or...

To commit oneself in the jungle of classifications, categories and specification; to express an absolutely clear definition is an extremely difficult venture. There is costume jewelry, gem-set jewelry, designers' jewelry, gold jewelry, genuine jewelry, fake jewelry, imitation jewelry, folklore jewelry, commercial "normal" jewelry, fantasy jewelry, artistic jewelry – jewelry art.

The finance authorities know, they must define types – taxes depend on it. Civil servants simply open their "Worterbuch der Kunst" (1966) by Johannes Jahn and look under "arts and crafts." There they determine all branches of art fall under that definition that do not lend form to imagination and do not exist for their own sake – in other words, "arts and crafts" encompasses all those areas that lend beauty to the practicality of an object by simply artistically designing and forming it.

Jewelry enhances human worth. Does the person himself, then, become a work of art, or just the "thing" with which he adorns himself? From the standpoint of architecture, the problem looks quite different. "The function of embellishment wanes in face of an aesthetic, symbolic and magic significance. Compared to architecture in the grip of functionalism, jewelry has the freedom of the afunctional" (Günther Feuerstein). Perhaps the problem can be solved by the confrontation of the unique with multiples. According to Walter Benjamin, a work of art obtains its unique value from its original and genuine usefulness in ritual. Secularization drives art further into the profane service of beauty. The possibility of reproduction on a grand scale evokes the contradictory movement of *l'art pour l'art*, which rejects social function as well as concrete practicality. "The technical ability to reproduce works of art freed them from their parasitical existence in ritual. Further, the possibility of reproduction becomes more and more the reproduction of a work of art especially wrought for that purpose" (Walter Benjamin, about 1930).

What help for the goldsmith, after the technical ability to reproduce works of art has so altered the traditional respect for his profession and the whole professional picture? In any case, the loss of status in society was the basis for the development of new paths: On the one hand there is the possibility to achieve respect as an artist. Concepts such as "unique piece" assure the association with art, the emphasis is on handicraft. But the traditional goldsmith gets caught in a conflict with the prevailing concept of art as removed from practical artifacts.

On the other hand, today's goldsmith becomes creator/designer in the jewelry industry and his individual style is doomed to lose itself to the anonymity of mass production. The personal "signature" is missing on these pieces, which are exactly alike. Artists lend their names (which stand for uniqueness, specialness, originality) to these products and in this dire manner increase their value. Jewelry art should be seen in the same light as furniture – as objects of art. They have their contemporary status. Industrial and communications artists/designers fought for that successfully; their art objects have the go-ahead. They "are the unbroken reaction to hopes, fears and the subjectivity of the times: they are seismographs of social controversy and the way out of everyday commercialization. They serve more the forethought given to possibilities than the confirmation of necessity" (Christian Borngräber, 1987). And in jewelry is found the manifestation of the artistic determination to open boundaries, to blast away categories, to undermine the possibilities of classification, to block specifications. Let us create gardens rather than new boxes. Only then will jewelry be freed from old illusions of form, function, material and values. Free of handed-down dependencies there is suddenly room – with no ultimate definition for jewelry, an art like any other.

Veronika Schwarzinger, V&V Galerie, Vienna. Schwarzinger was originally a member of the "Ornamenta 1" advisory board.

Text originally published in the "Ornamenta 1" organizing committee booklet.

Jamie Bennett

In the Beginning (Again)

It is a rare and most welcome event

when a technical innovation is accompanied by an esthetic revelation.

This is the case with Jamie Bennett's new work,

a series of brooches, whose electroformed armature is covered

with what seems like a free-floating plane of enamel.

Not only has Bennett achieved a separation of form from surface,

an enamel without a visible metal support,

but he has in the process redefined the role of a colorist in jewelry.

by Vanessa Lynn

In 1988, Jamie Bennett unveiled a series of electroformed copper and enamel brooches that appeared to be a radical departure from his previous work. Unlike the cool, abstract restraint he employed earlier, these new pieces seemed to pulse with an internal force, from a visceral, organic, evocative center. What this work did share with its predecessors were signs of the struggle to tap a heretofore unexpressed language from the ancient medium of enamel jewelry. To unleash that potential, Bennett had long sought ways to break the linear rigidity and technical tyranny that have bound the medium.

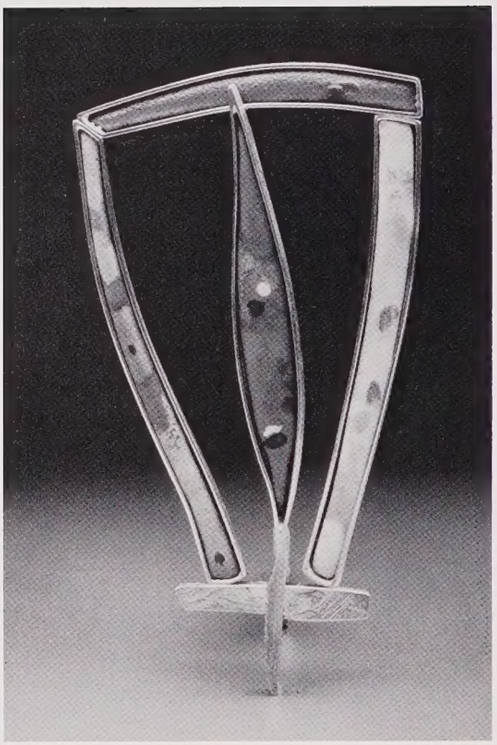
The new *Priori* series crystalizes and fulfills these long-standing ambitions. Clearly, a major achievement for Bennett is his release from the self-imposed constraints of the picture plane. The fact that these electroformed units are conceived and completed entirely in the round gives him the freedom to embrace not just painting but jewelry, as well. It is a richness he has long denied himself. In doing so – in making jewelry that references itself, that invokes the vital force of nature, that possesses a self-generated physicality – Bennett celebrates the sublime aspect of enamel.

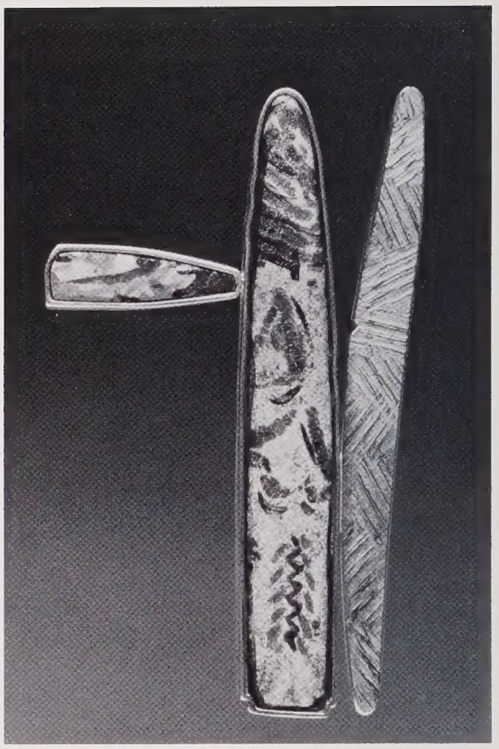
A fascination with the enamel reliquaries and the tiled nave processions of the Byzantine period underlies Bennett's twin passions: a staunch commitment to the emotive intimacy of an object and a steadfast preference for the cool, self-referentialism of formalist painting. The vast conceptual space between the two led Bennett to experiment with painting and sculpture in order to reconcile their differences. Mysterious, shrinelike wall constructions and vibrantly sensual works on paper form an important part of his development when seen in this light.

Opposite page, left
Deerrun 21 brooch
silver, enamel, 18k gold, 3 x 2½"
1987

Opposite page, right
Reverse of *Deerrun 21*

Piori 21 brooch
enamel, 18k, 20k gold on copper, 6" l.
1989





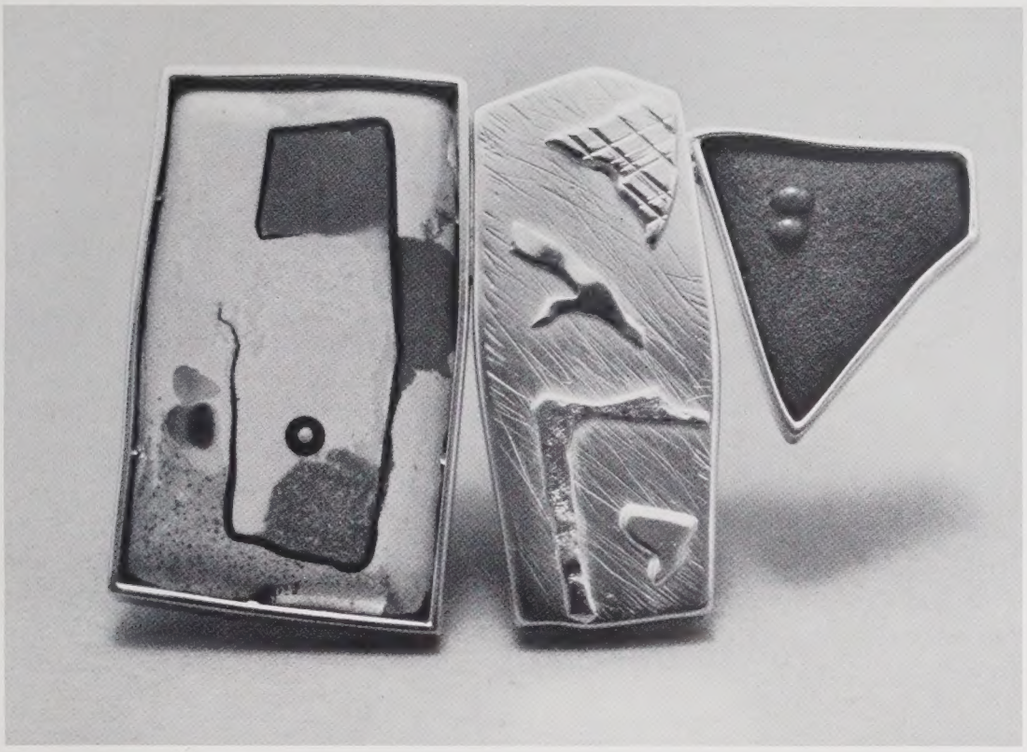
In retrospect, Bennett needed to explode the potential of each medium before he could reassemble the most vivid parts into the potent new brooches. The gestural cloisonné line, derived from his investigations on paper, broke the static design of earlier efforts such as *Black* series, 1981-82. Shortly after this attack on the picture plane, Bennett began the *Coloratura* series, 1985, attempting to introduce an emotive content to his reliefs by breaking the pictorial surface into a disjunctive triad. With the *Deerrun,* 1986 – 87, *Calypsos*, 1987 and *Aiuola* (garden) series, 1988, additional elements seemed to point to *Priori*, 1989-90: nature abounded; the surfaces gained force with rich texture. Still, these works held contradictions, as Bennett worked the backs with an animated, deeply cut gesture while containing the energy through the imposition of a frame.

With the realization that all he had been seeking might find its resolution in a clearly three-dimensional format, Bennett spent over a year in technical experimentation on *Priori.* He refers ruefully to the boxes of mistakes that still litter his studio – pieces too thin, too leaden, too chunky, too silent. But with a combination of hard and soft waxes, he learned to carve and model in pursuit of his envisioned form. He arrived initially at an irregular, five-inch cylinder, whose pocked, misshapen surface suggested an internal eruption. Equally organic, vestigial or finlike protuberances often emerged perpendicularly to the main barrel-form, serving further to emphasize the sense of an inner force. The electroformed tubes were variously closed with pinched finials or floriated ends.

Further additions/alterations to the bodies occurred with an array of small, gold bands or shields, occasionally applied

Above left
Calypsos brooch
silver and enamel, 4½ x 2", 1987

Above right
Aiuola brooch
silver, enamel, 18k gold, 4 x 2", 1988



to or wrapped over small segments of the cylinder skin. And, in the most astonishing departure of all, slim, gold bits were fashioned into irregular, primitive charms, perhaps enameled, maybe pierced or gouged – left to dangle and resound from the larger column.

With the *Priori* series, Bennett has succeeded in building a holistic form, whose expressive plasticity appears inextricable from the pigment and coloration of its surface. In fact, surface is perceived as resulting from the growth of the internal structure. With the electroformed skin mottled under carved layers of stippled color, Bennett has performed the ultimate painterly illusion. The distinctive colors seem to glow from within. One feels these primal forms exist by virtue of their color, that their very essence is their color. With the variety of texture achieved, both actual and suggested, they beseech the viewer to touch and to hold, to respond to their life-affirming presence.

Vanessa Lynn is a writer living in New York, who frequently contributes to Metalsmith.

Coloratura Blue brooch
enamel, 14k gold, 1¾ x 2", 1985

FOCUS

Susan Kingsley's work has involved a long, determined struggle with the role of a woman artist in the field of jewelry and metalsmithing. In her new, introspective series of sculptures, she has turned to fashioning objects of utility that she characterizes as "Enlightened Embranglements." *"Enlightened means informed, free from prejudice and ignorance, and given the light of truth and knowledge. Embranglement means a confusion and entanglement. I like the contradiction in this. I call the work enlightened because of its use of candlelight, while suggesting that the work is somehow full of truth and knowledge, and at the same time it is full of confusion."*

Susan Kingsley

Enlightened Embranglements

by Rick Deragon

Above
Staghorn
acrylic lacquer, patina,
electroformed, fabricated copper, airbrushed
28 x 13 x 6", 1989

Opposite page
Enlightened Embranglement
with Three Flowers
acrylic lacquer, patina, electroformed,
fabricated copper, airbrushed, patinaed
17 x 12 x 12", 1989
Collection: Kathleen Downs
Photo: Lee Hocker

Susan Kingsley has always created pieces that read more as sculpture than ornaments. In the past, Kingsley's works consisted of strange pods and flowers bursting with a creepy vitality. They did not resonate with any sun-soaked life of fecundity nor did they conjure a life of frivolity; rather, a bristly, threatening, ominous quality permeated each metallic creation.

In contrast, Kingsley's most recent body of work assumes, at first glance, a quiet domesticity, for one sees chandeliers, candelabras and small candleholders. These functional, candle-related sculptures contain only vestiges of the earlier works' eeriness. But the new work was conceived in darkness, and it is in dim candlelight, the netherworld of shadows, that these embranglements best live.

Twisted and gnarled twigs and vines throw dancing shadows on walls, tables or ceiling. Tenuous and tenacious leaves and flowers, nestled within each tangle, seem to quiver with an inner life. The snarl of vines writhe to their own logic; the vigor of the natural forms intensifies in the maternal cloak of firelight.

In these new pieces, the metal forms interact with sculptural space in provocative ways. With her characteristic mastery of materials, Kingsley has fashioned flowers, branches and tendrils in woven configurations that catalyze the surrounding space and cast dancing shadows. She surrenders to an involved process of observation, inspiration, fabrication and, finally, liberation. As each piece becomes whole, united with its crucial light source, it takes on a new life. The transitory flame flickers, the shadow pulses, sculptural space comes alive.

Kingsley collects weird and fascinating bits of the biological world: seaweed, dried flowers, leaves, shells, grasses, vines; mushrooms, roots and shoots populate a personal gallery of forms. These, pinned to a board or lying about in her studio, serve as prompters; templates mimic the natural world, and the bending and twisting of metal tubes and wires have proto-sources. As the artist pounds and hammers copper sheets cut from the templates, the "critter" board is there for guidance, inspiration. This correlation to the natural world infuses the embranglements with plausibility; from life they have sprung into a sculptural domain of form, space, light and shadow – evocation.

Natural flotsam and jetsam give birth to tangible forms, and more. Kingsley, as both creator and midwife, urges the metal components into shape, coaxes the forms into the electroplating baths, praises each piece under the buffer and grinder, applies lacquers and patinas, until the work emerges, complete. From the intangible realm of thought and inspiration the forms are

manifested; as each sculpture is completed and candlelighted, the magic of art/life occurs, and the work returns to an ethereal, intangible state. It emotes, conjures, suggests, reminds. A full circle of process is complete.

Thus, on their own domestic terms, "Enlightened Entanglements" work as utilitarian and sculptural objects. This marriage of art form and function is made in place – suspended from the ceiling as chandelier, as candelabra and as sconcelike wall piece. In all, the strong structure of twigs, vines and tendrils interacts with the weightless state of leaves and blossoms, and the palpable shadows.

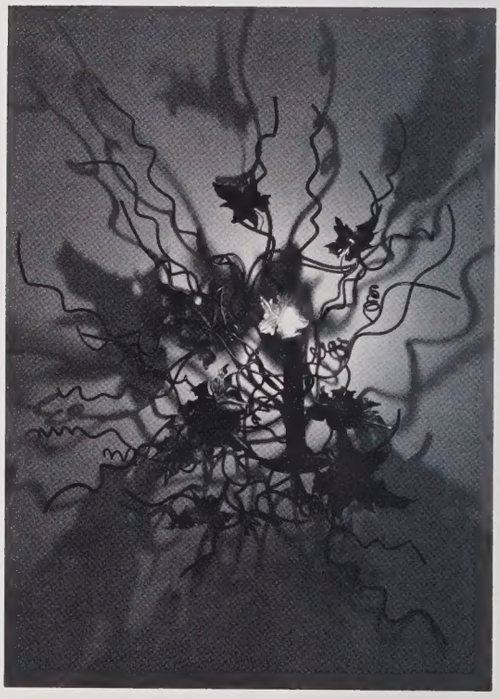
In *Chandelier*, the dynamic throng of linear forms serves as a palpitating support for the stabile, vertical thrusts of the candles. Echoing this verticality are three fuschialike blossoms dandling from branches, precious counterpoints to the gnarled tautness above. The shadows cast on the table surface below, vital parts of this kinetic sculpture, flicker and dance with the atmospheric breeze.

Candelabra and *Enbranglement with Three Flowers* appear as swirling masses of tendrils spiraling upward, culminating in the climactic flame. The linear dominance of each piece creates an anxiety – motion and chaos have just been frozen but might momentarily resume their frenzied affair with space.

Other works, *Shadowy Embranglement*, *Staghorn* and *Sea Leaves*, play a more conventional visual game as wall pieces: they may be seen as baroque paintings as much as dimensional dramas. Crafted so that the flame peeks out from behind the flat, fluttering, veined and long-leafed mass, the work triples in size and spectra as shadows are cast and the light burns away. Bold, noble shapes contrast to the flashy, illuminated surfaces – effects of which Caravaggio or Rembrandt might be proud. The dramatic light, so integral to the works' success, engages and establishes a solid sense of movement, of "becoming."

Kingsley has refined the eerie, threatening characteristics of previous works into dramas wherein her signature forms, in concert with shadows, unfold for the viewer (or diners). They invite the viewer to experience, rather than challenging the viewer to scrutinize; they do not confront. These concrete forms of vines, branches, tendrils and leaves explore the abstract realm of movement, light and the everpresent shadow.

Embrangled Candelabras
acrylic lacquer, patina,
electroformed, fabricated copper, airbrushed
17 x 8 x 8", 1989



Rick Deragon is currently the art critic for The Herald, *a daily newspaper in Monterey, California, and a contributing writer for* Artweek. *He is the former Curator at the Monterey Peninsula Museum of Art and has served on the art faculty at California State Univeristy, Chico.*

Shadowy Embranglement
acrylic lacquer, patina, electroformed, fabricated copper, airbrushed
26 x 20 x 6", l989

F O C U S

× × × × × × × × × × × × × ×

Above
Moonlight Wall
brooch, sterling, 14k gold, slate, nickel silver, paua shell, 3½ x 2½ x ½", 1989

Right
Riot Gear
brooch, sterling, 14k gold, slate, bronze, nickel silver, copper, tourmaline, 4 x 2½ x ½", 1988

Mac McCall is a Western shaman, or, as Elizabeth Sasser claims, a wizard of ambiguity. In this focus, she offers an inside look at the workings of his current jewelry, which, in many ways, forms a mythic narrative drawn from cultures separated by time and distance: the American West, the Shogun Era, Roman Antiquity. But, like that of any good shaman, there is an "edge" to McCall's story, beneath the material patina a trenchant message which he articulates clearly:

> "THE ART WHICH INTRIGUES ME PARTICULARLY IS BASED ON A REFERENTIAL OR REPRESENTATIONAL MODE; IT ELICITS A RESPONSE THAT GOES BEYOND A SIMPLE APPRECIATION OF, OR ESTHETIC COMMENT ON, THE INFORMATION PRESENTED ABOUT THAT SUBJECT."

Mac McCall

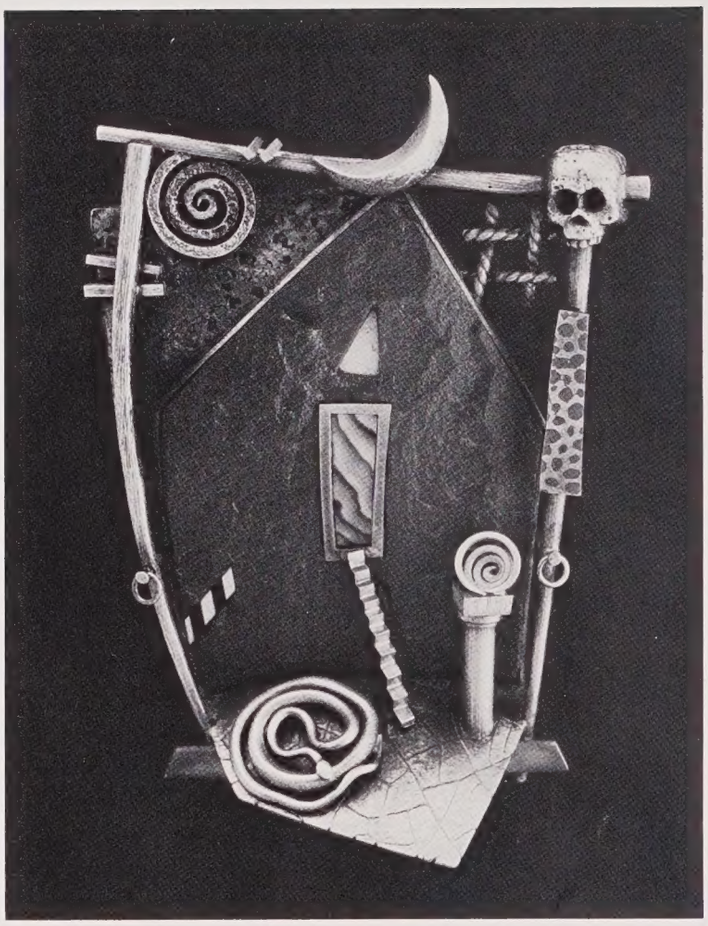
WIZARD OF AMBIGUITY

by Elizabeth Skidmore Sasser

In *Lost Language of Symbols,* Harold Bayley has called language "fossil poetry," in which "every word was originally a poem embodying a bold metaphor." Visual symbols do not fossilize; spirals and tectiforms and meandering serpents are regenerated from millennium to millennium and from generation to generation. Each marking seems to accumulate power as it becomes encrusted with myth and modern archaeology. California metalsmith Mac McCall constructs brooches of bronze, silver and gold; for these, he uses images from the subconscious, from the petroglyphs of pre-history, the breastplates of Roman legionnaires and trophies carried through the streets of Rome. This imagery is overlaid with an aura of the West: nature, western ranches and the radical humor of the San Francisco Bay Area.

McCall describes his sources as "highly eclectic." Like Joseph Cornell, he accumulates what he calls "a lot of stuff." "It's like opening a drawer," he says," and finding things to pull out. They all mean something and they're all important, but the effort to connect pieces is sometimes difficult and tenuous." While living most of his life in the West, he speaks of an incongruous and influential childhood experience in Japan. In this foreign environment, he was receptive to everything – Japanese fairy tales, the colors and textures of everyday objects, a favorite *samurai* doll holding miniature swords. As an adult, McCall continues to find excitement and visual information in the overlapping patterns of Japanese woodblock prints, ceramics, in metal weaponry and the humbler household utensils.

The textured metal used by McCall for a brooch titled *Blue Moonlight* recalls the fabrics of traditional Japanese kimonos. A piece of shaped slate, with color airbrushed on the surface, serves as a foil for the controlled metal patterns, while sharing a kinship with the stone gardens of Japan. In the foreground of the brooch, a window acts as a framing device. It follows the format adopted by McCall in order to maintain a sense of continuity from one series of brooches to another. The frame suggests the Japanese *shoji* screen that is pushed aside to invite the interpenetration of inside and outside space. To McCall, the rectilinear openings in his work are viewed as "little metaphors," that is, "windows of opportunity," and, conversely, in the jargon of the



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Big Ranch
brooch, sterling, 14k gold, nickel silver, slate, turquoise, Colorcore, 3 x 2 x ¾", 1989

Pentagon, "windows of vulnerability." Vulnerability is emphasized in *Blue Moonlight* by a pointed sword that penetrates the rock and the open window. The weapon, whether consciously or not, strikes a bond with the forged swords that for centuries were associated with the Japanese Shogun Age.

Riot Gear is also about weapons – clubs and rings clank against a shield similar in shape to those carried by phalanx of Korean police. McCall hastens to make it clear that the brooch does not contain a political agenda. He says, "I've always been interested in armor and military images, but I'm not a gun man. I don't keep guns; but they interest me as pieces of metalwork." The slate body of *Riot Gear* is topped with a metal band textured like leopard spots. The leopart skin motif is used as an accent in many of the brooches. It has for McCall a primitive impact that is mysterious and exotic. It is also associated with camouflage. Intrigued with this form of military disguise, the artist's attention was attracted to a book on methods for concealing jet aircraft. Among the illustrations were planes owned by small African countries. Some of these were painted with designs resembling native insignia or shields covered with animal skins. *Riot Gear* itself is like a chameleon. The imagery of the shield at times seems to disappear and dissolve into the helmeted head of an Aztec Jaquar Knight.

The helmets of Pre-Columbian warriors, Celtic pins for woolen cloaks, medieval shields decorated with heraldic devices and armored breastplates all form prototypes for McCall's brooches. Originally his pieces were flat; he discovered, however, that doming made the brooches look more assertive as well as strengthening them.

[A BROOCH] CARRIES A CERTAIN AUTHORITY THAT SEEMS TO ME DIFFERENT FROM OTHER ADORNMENT. A NUMBER OF PEOPLE IN OUR CULTURE WHO DON'T WEAR JEWELRY DO WEAR BADGES, USUALLY SIGNIFYING SOME POSITION OF AUTHORITY. MOST JEWELRY FORMS...SPEAK ABOUT STYLE, FASHION AND/OR WEALTH, WHILE BROOCHES USUALLY DO THE SAME, THEY SEEM TO CARRY A CERTAIN ADDED AUTHORITY BECAUSE OF HOW THEY ARE WORN. IT IS THAT SOMEWHAT SUBVERSIVE QUALITY THAT I LIKE.

The "subversive" element in McCall's art involves layered meanings and alternative solutions. A wizard of ambiguity, he says that he is drawn to those situations where truth and fact are not necessarily the same thing. He likes the idea "that someone who may not be interested in jewelry as an art may have to deal with a piece because it suggests, if only for a moment, some sort of emblem which indicates a connection to the world beyond the esthetics of the expected."

McCall creates puzzles for the intellect and for the intuition. Asked about the meaning of the "x" that is a current symbol in the brooches, the answer is, "It's a shape I like; shapes develop subliminally. For me, it is a cliché associated with the seventies; the spiral, which goes back to the Bronze Age, is the cliché for the eighties." He says, "I'm intrigued with clichés. An image begins to lose power when it becomes so much a cliché that it no longer means anything. At the same time, the image gains power because people have begun to identify with it and learn from it. I have become seduced by clichés. I think a lot about this."

It is common knowledge, McCall points out, if "xs" and spirals and stars appear on the pages of a comic book in a balloon

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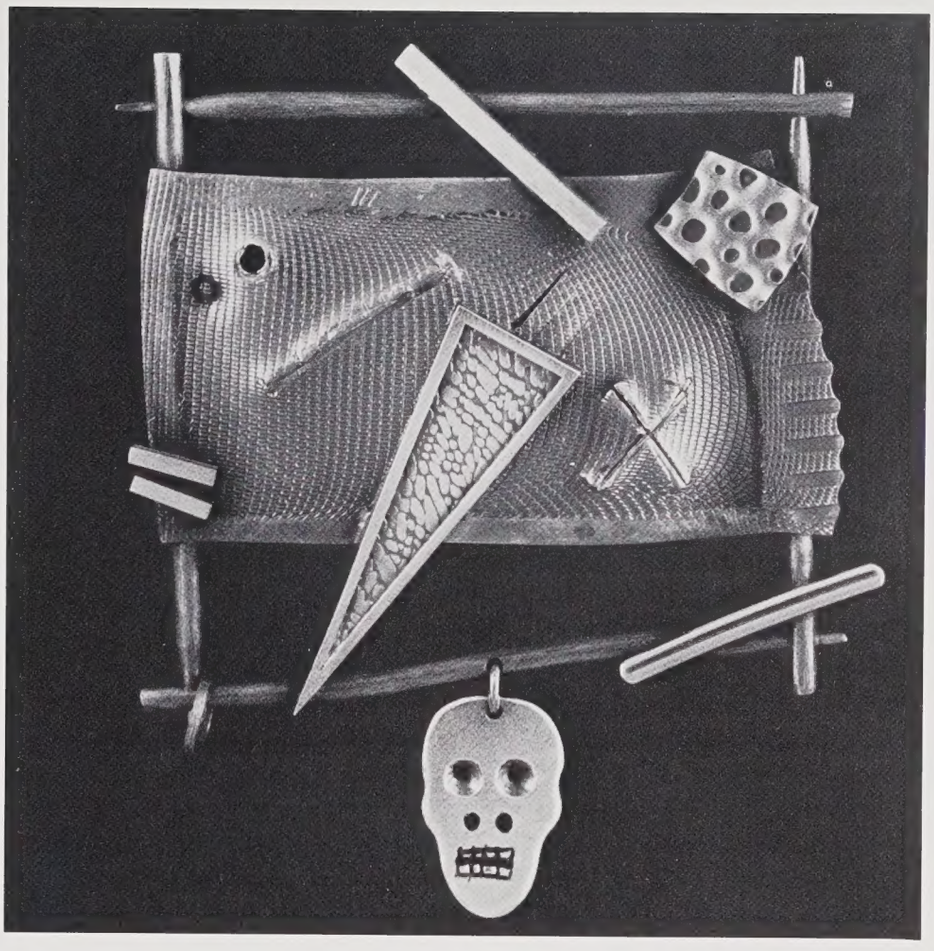
Bar X II
brooch, sterling, 14k gold, nickel silver, bronze, 2½ x 2 x ¼", 1986



over a cartoon character's head, they are symbols for profanity. In Montana, he continues, there are ranch gates with wrought iron initials or brands across the top. If spirals and stars and "xs" were marched over the archway, they would look familiar, but the real information would be different from the observer's expectations. Jewelry can be subversive in this ambiguous fashion. A "relatively traditional format and materials" allow the brooches "to carry imagery that might not be expected."

Unexpected signs and symbols are a part of *Big Ranch*. In this piece, the window as frame has been replaced by a gate. Security and danger coexist. The slate ranch house seems to offer safety, but threatening forces wait outside. A human skull is mounted on a gate post, a grim reminder of frontier justice and a grimmer reminder of the cliché that has become synonomous with Santa Fe decor – the ubiquitous cow skull. In front of the house, a spiral is balanced on a classical column, implying a tongue-in-cheek reference to Post-Modern architecture. The spiral becomes more ominous in the figure of a snake coiled close to the doorstep. "I sometimes think in terms of images of snakes and knives," McCall remarks. "They suggest that there's still an element of melodrama that persists in the West. Part of this feeling comes from living in an urban area that has many problems. All of the violent symbols of the Old West are now found in the cities."

Despite the richness and diversity brought together in McCall's metalwork, the whole is taut and controlled; the pieces are assembled without sacrificing precision of technique or function. McCall admits that he likes high tech. "I love the clean, spare look," he says, "but at the same time I'm drawn to the immediacy and directness of folk art and vernacular expressions." Personally, he prefers to work with traditional materials. He does not experiment with titanium or anodized aluminums; he is quick to admit that beautiful work is done with new materials and techniques. For his part, McCall finds how titanium is used in submarines more interesting. Using silver, gold and bronze, the brooches are often enlivened with small stones that have the effect of small points of light. McCall feels that when expensive, faceted stones are used, a line is crossed and the work begins to be about intrinsic values of the materials. The metal surfaces are important to McCall. He says that he uses "a lot of roller printing" and lately he has been casting sheets of textures. The patterned surfaces are reminiscent of natural or geological textures. McCall adds, "I'm fascinated by the way materials and objects – particularly metal – age through time and use. I attempt to develop surfaces and patinas that both suggest a sense of history and anticipate further wear."

As masterly symbols and metaphors, Mac McCall's visual signs have gathered strength through repetition while always leaving a last mystery unrevealed. The message is that things are not always what they seem. The artist says, "I know what a little skull means to me, but that's not the point. I know what I mean; what does my work mean to you when you look at it? I know what I feel. What do you feel? I know what I know about this. What do you know about it? What do you bring to the experience? A person may come back and say, 'Gee, that's what I see; this is interesting.' In this way an artist may learn something about himself."

Elizabeth Skidmore Sasser is a Professor of Architecture at Texas Tech University, Lubbock, TX and a contributing editor to Metalsmith.

FIRST LADY of British Jewelry

by Deborah Norton

Starting in the early 1950s, Gerda Flöckinger worked to change the face of British jewelry. Others joined her fledgling crusade, only to drift off to other fields, or to other countries, where the contemporary jewelry movement was more established. Only she persevered, relentlessly urging British jewelry into the modern age. Today, 37 years after she first began to study jewelrymaking, she remains a creator of influential work.

Gerda Flöckinger, a native Austrian who came to England in 1938, was introduced to contemporary crafts while on a trip through Italy in 1952. Two years after she left St. Martin's School of Art, where she studied painting, she saw modern ceramics and furniture at the Biennale in Venice and suddenly realized there was something really new in crafts. Later in Ravenna, it came to her in a flash that she must learn to make modern jewelry. "I was very modern in my thinking," Flöckinger says today. "I wanted to change the face of everything, to create a whole new imagery in England."

Upon returning to London, she enrolled in jewelry classes at the Central School of Art and Design. Fortuitously, a unique experiment in teaching had begun there. Once a week, artists, including the painters Richard Hamilton, Mary Kessell, Victor Pasmore and Partick Heron, were to teach the otherwise technically oriented jewelry course for students apprenticed in the trade. The artists were quite successful, translating their abstract visions into jewelry. According to Flöckinger, a student exhibition in 1952 contained "a terrific explosion of interesting work." But for the apprentices, the lessons taught in this course proved ephemeral. As soon as they returned to the trade, they were forced to abandon

Necklace, 18k gold, cabochon quartz, opals, moonstones, tourmalines, Persian turquoise, cultured pearls, 1971. Private collection.
Photo: courtesy of the Crafts Council.
This very long necklace, meant to wrap around the neck four times, was exhibited at the V&A in 1973.
The center element – starting at the large cabochon on the right and ending with the large disc in the center – is removable and can be hooked onto the necklace as a pendant.

Necklace, oxidized silver, 18k gold, cabochon garnet, pearls, 1968. Private collection. Photo: courtesy of the Worshipful Company of Goldsmiths. Here Flöckinger has totally given way to fusion. In the center of the disc, some elements have melted more than she originally intended and some of the lines are not exactly where she planned to put them, but this lack of complete control gives the piece vibrancy.

their experimental designs. However for Flöckinger, the effect of these teachings was profound: "Without this class I don't know whether my own ideas would have developed in a similar way."

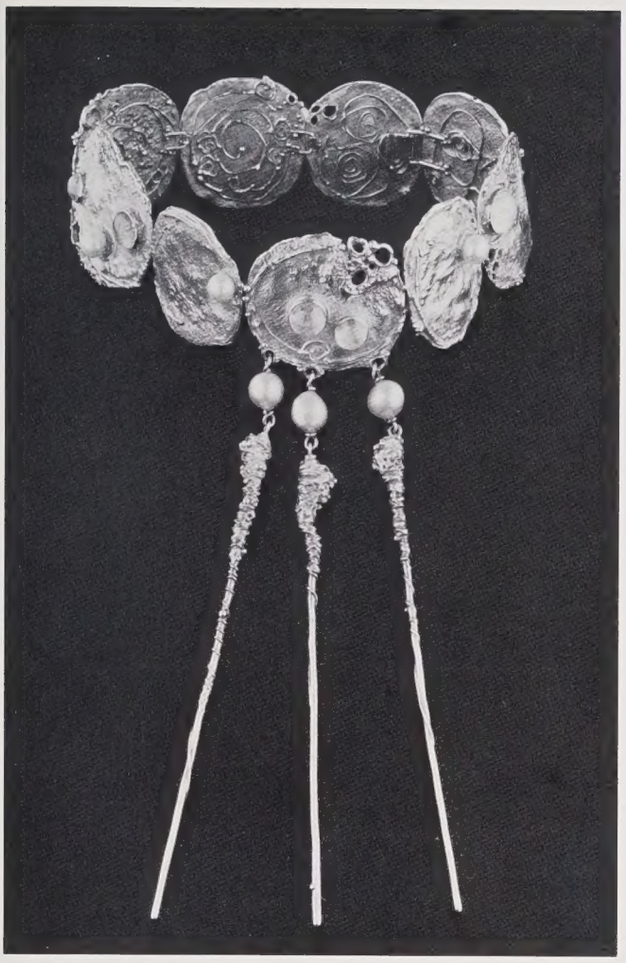
This period of experimental teaching lasted only two years. By 1954, several of the original artist-teachers had left to pursue other goals, and the program began to flounder. This same year, Flöckinger left the school and took a job factory designing fashion jewelry ("Mind blowingly boring" is how she describes it). She only lasted eight weeks, at which time, she set up a bench in her kitchen and began the long struggle to establish herself as a studio jeweler. She continued to take classes at the Central in order to have access to the tools and equipment that she could not afford to buy. Slowly, commissions trickled in as well as opportunities to exhibit. In 1955, Mary Quant asked several of the Central's jewelry students, including Flöckinger, to design contemporary pieces for the new boutique she was opening. Liberty department store bought some of Flöckinger's enamel dishes, and her work was included in a Christmas show at the ICA (Institute for Contemporary Arts). But her most significant breakthrough came in 1958 when Graham Hughes, Art Director (1951-1980) of the Goldsmiths' Hall in London, purchased her jewelry for the Hall's collection.

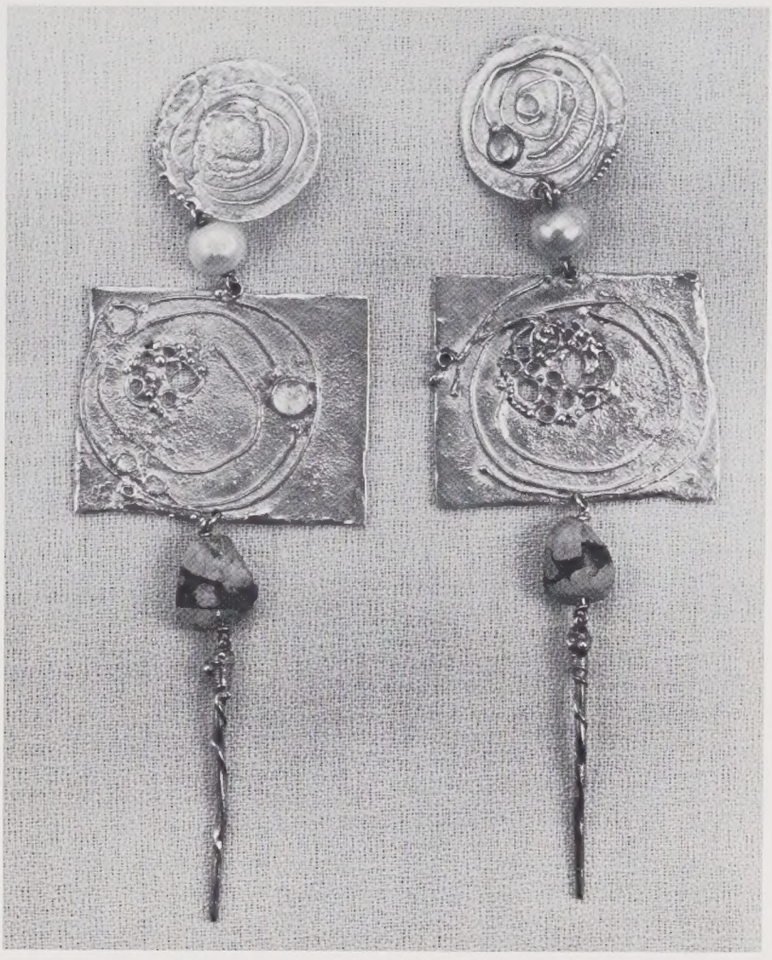
At this time, her work was very influenced by Scandinavian design. She favored smooth, polished surfaces and simple hard-edged forms. She was aware of the jewelry being made in America, as she was given a subscription to *Craft Horizons*. Although she was not directly influenced by what she saw in it, she admired the work of Sam Kramer and many others.

Her reputation continued to grow to such an extent that, in 1960, the Victoria and Albert Museum bought two of her pieces. These were the first pieces of contemporary jewelry the museum acquired. In 1961, six of her pieces were included in the "International Exhibition of Modern Jewelry 1890-1961" organized by Graham Hughes at the Goldsmiths' Hall. According to Flöckinger, this show received much publicity and by focusing attention on modern jewelry, was the start of the British revolution in this field.

The following year, Flöckinger was invited to teach at the Hornsey School of Art in London (now Middlesex Polytechnic), where there was a newly appointed, progressive thinking principal who wanted to turn Hornsey into a major center for art education. Unlike the Central and a few other schools, where the concept of art was introduced into traditional trade classes, this was to be Britain's first intentionally experimental jewelry course. Because it was not a degree granting program, Flöckinger was given free reign to do as she pleased. Thus, studio work was augmented by drawing of natural and life forms, projects dealing with color, etc. To learn stone setting, engraving and other highly skilled techniques the students were sent to evening classes at a trade school. It took a few years before the students' work began to show promise, but by 1965 the work had improved to such a degree that Graham Hughes bought the entire contents of a student exhibition for the Goldsmiths' Hall.

Hornsey provided Flöckinger with a forum from which she could espouse her ideas about contemporary jewelry. She only taught for six years, but in that brief period her influence was far-





reaching. David Poston who, along with Charlotte de Syllas, is probably her best known student, chose to attend Hornsey because Flöckinger was there, even though it had no degree status. As late as 1967, when Poston entered Hornsey, she was the lone alternative to what Poston describes as "saw it up and stick it together" modern jewelry. It was her integrity, her absolute standards and her passionate engagement with her work that influenced her students, not the style in which she was working. "I was keen that nobody should work like me at all," she recalls. According to Poston, her influence was "as a master who broke barriers."

It was while teaching at Hornsey that her jewelry began to move away from Scandinavian design. Quite by chance, she discovered fusing, which radically changed her work. "One day in 1963 my work was going very poorly and I was depressed," she says. "I was mucking about with pieces on the bench – strands of silver and rectangles which I twisted up into a bead. Then I fused bits of all different sizes onto it. I thought it was awful. But I continued to work and finally threaded the beads up and thought, you can't possibly work by melting things together. But today I still use fused beads, only now they're more developed and refined." For a number of years fusing was an experimental process for Flöckinger. "I didn't know what the metal would do," she says. "I made a terrific load of mistakes. I didn't have sufficient control over the process. In 1974, I started a necklace for the Royal Scottish Museum. I made two disc pieces with diamonds, pearls and opals, fused silver details and gold dust. But then, the next discs I made failed. I couldn't repeat the process and didn't know why. So I made a completely different necklace for the museum in

Above left
Necklace, silver, cabochon aquamarines, tourmalines, cultured pearls, 1971.
Collection: Crafts Council of Great Britain.
Courtesy of the Crafts Council.
Photo: David Cripps. This was exhibited in Flöckinger's solo exhibition at the V&A in 1971. Much attention has been focused on creating a rich surface texture. The three dangling elements, effectively incorporating fusing and wrapping, echo the 1959 necklace she made for the V&A.

Above right
Earrings, silver, moonstones, pearls, turquoise, 1973.
Collection: Goldsmiths' Hall.
Photo: courtesy of the Worshipful Company of Goldsmiths.
The center rectangles of these earrings have the quality of a quick sketch.

Necklace, oxidized silver, 18k gold, opals, pearls (cultured and fresh water), diamonds, 1976 – 78. Private collection. Photo: courtesy of the Crafts Council. By this piece, Flöckinger has finally mastered fusing, and the surface texture, lines and tracery are stronger and clearer than in previous work.

three weeks. I wasn't until the mid 70s that I actually figured out how to control fusion. And I realized that it was quite easy."

Flöckinger left Hornsey in 1968, when a rebellion by the students caused the school to temporarily shut down. She now had the necessary time to do her own work, something she had neglected while teaching. In 1968, Graham Hughes offered Flöckinger her first solo exhibition at the Craft Centre of Great Britain (now Contemporary Applied Arts), where he was the chairman. In this show, she exhibited her fused pieces as well as some work done in her old Scandinavian-inspired style. She incorporated rough, semiprecious stones and stone that she cut and carved herself. To Ralph Turner, this exhibition appeared to mark a turning point in her career, and Flöckinger agrees. "It was the first time in six years that I devoted myself exclusively to my own work," she says, "and I guess the results did prove to be a turning point for me." Despite Flöckinger's claim that she lacked control over fusing at this time, Turner felt that her technique had developed considerably since her first efforts in 1963. He characterized her work as having a visual, poetic tranquility.[1]

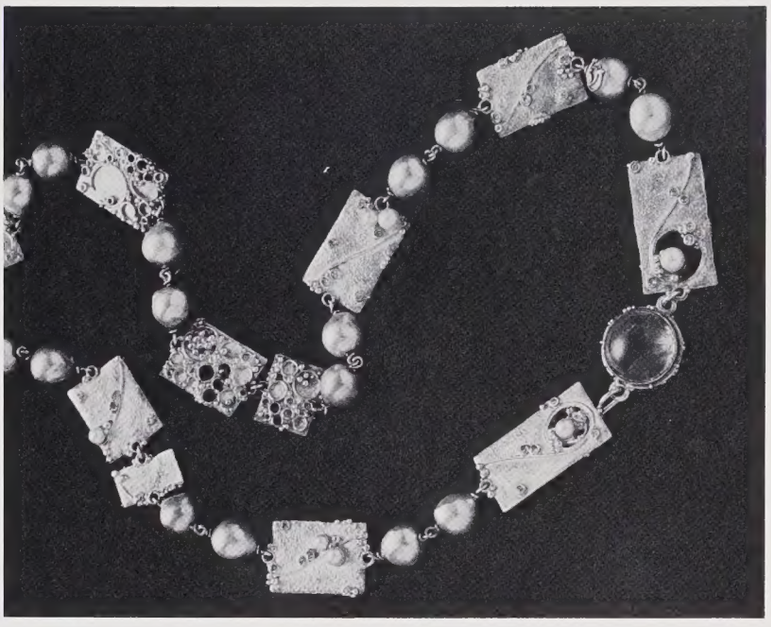
It was shortly after this exhibition that she abandoned the Scandinavian style and devoted herself completely to fusing, her hallmark. The inspiration for these fused pieces arose from the pieces themselves – from watching the metal and observing what would become of elements when they were heated. Her approach has always been more instinctive than intellectual. She worked in isolation and was not influenced by other artists.

This show led to an offer from the Victoria and Albert Museum in 1971, for its first solo exhibition of work by a living jeweler. This exhibition proved a resounding success and was reviewed in several influential journals. *Apollo* described her designs as characterized by "a complex intertwining of sinewy linear movements, rather like tendrils from an exotic climbing plant with a prehensile enclosing grip."[2] In *Connoisseur,* Caroline Shaw observed that the "Scandinavian edges have softened into romanticism with a wealth of precise but extravagant detailing. There is nothing vulgar or flashy in her new work...She fuses or solders gold with silver and sometimes oxidizes it with different metals to get a lovely radiance."[3] *Design* noted that the turning point to her work was when she started fusing. "Her jewelry at once discarded its rather tight, formal appearance and began to take on a much more subtle life of its own. The once smooth, regular surfaces have become pitted and scarred – often overlaid with gold dust or garnished with fine scrolls of wire in a manner recalling the decorative work of Klimt and Viennese Art Nouveau."[4] Flöckinger acknowledges this affinity with Art Nouveau, although she leans toward the abstract rather than the stylization of natural forms.

Until 1975 Flöckinger continued to explore different directions in her work. But then she felt it was time to refine what she had already done. For the past 15 years she has been producing jewelry that is highly sophisticated and refined in the style of her early, more primitive fused pieces. Because the fusion process can never be totally controlled, her work maintains the spontaneity that gave her earlier pieces such life.

"I work on evocation," Flöckinger says of her creative process. "I try to evoke certain emotions, certain feelings. I'm

Necklace, silver, 18k gold, cabochon emerald, moonstones, gray and white cultured pearls, carved iolite, cabochon ruby, c. 1977. Private collection. Photo: courtesy of the Crafts Council. Again, the dangling elements and wrapping combine in fairly straightforward piece but with many details to contemplate.



Necklace, silver, 18k gold, pink tourmaline, brown diamonds, cultured pearls, 1981. Private collection. Photo: Ian Dobbie, courtesy of the Crafts Council. Similar in concept to Flöckinger's necklace of 1971, but this time the piece has more control and finesse.

looking for a sense of excitement or zing. This is very difficult to achieve and I always feel while I'm working on a piece that it dies many times. But with luck, when it's all finished and all the elements are there and all the colors are finally put in, it will have zing."

It is ironic that today this woman who virtually invented contemporary jewelry in Britain is sometimes accused by her younger peers of being too traditional. Flöckinger dismisses these charges, although she confesses that they anger her. "Very early on I tried using materials other than silver and gold, so during the late 70s when people started using alternative materials it didn't tempt me. I worked in acrylics in the 60s but it was more for projects than an end in itself. When titanium first came out, I thought it was terribly pretty but it has just become a fashion – a fashion which has already past."

Today, Flöckinger's philosophy towards contemporary jewelry may seem out of place in a world where trendiness reigns supreme, but it is well worth contemplating. "I have always felt that if you're putting a lot of effort into a piece it should be something where you will get a lot back. But you're not going to get much back from a material like acrylic. You'll get what you see. Whereas, from a complex gold or silver piece, there are many aspects or facets that you don't see in a constant way. I strive to create things which beguile the eye, that make the eye and mind travel so you can't ever quite make out or remember everything that's there. And one fine day you come upon an element which you never saw before."

Notes

1. Turner, Ralph. *Contemporary Jewelry* (Cassell & Collier Macmillan Ltd.), London, 1976, p. 53.
2. *Apollo*, vol. 93, p. 133 – 134, Feb. 71.
3. *Connoisseur*, vol. 176, p. 150, Feb. 71.
4. *Design*, vol. 266, p. 39 – 41, Feb. 71.

Deborah Norton is a contributing editor to Metalsmith *living in London.*

BENCHMARK

Kayserzinn Pewter

The first American exhibition of "Kayserzinn" Pewter,
the trademark for art pewter ware manufactured at the turn of the century
by J.P. Kayser Sohn of Krefeld, Germany,
occupied the changing exhibitions area in the design installation floor
at the Museum of Modern Art in New York
from October 12, 1989 through February 6, 1990.
The exhibition, comprised of 35 pieces, including candlesticks, tea set and vases,
was organized by Associate Curator Cara McCarty, who explains its significance below.

by Cara McCarty

The use of pewter as a material in the applied arts was revived during the turn of the century when artists throughout Europe were searching for new forms of expression. Among the most unusual pewter objects from that time were those manufactured with the trademark "Kayserzinn" by the German firm J. P. Kayser Sohn.

The company had made traditional pewter ware in Krefeld since 1862. In 1894, Engelbert Kayser, the son of Johann Peter Kayser, set up the Kayserzinn art workshop in Cologne. The sculptor Hugo Leven, and subsequently Hermann Fauser, made the most original designs, which stood outside Art Nouveau's main line of development. Instead of the movement's characteristic preoccupation with applied surface decoration, Leven and other German Jugendstil artists concentrated on the invention of new shapes.

Leven's first pieces were conventional in style and were decorated with pictorial motifs, but a distinct break occurred in his work following a trip to France in 1896. Inspired by the French glass designer Emile Gallé, Leven abandoned historicism to pursue a more sculptural approach. He developed a "thumb-pressure relief" technique for modeling the clay from which pewter casts ultimately would be made. Works dating from 1900 to 1904 have been selected for the exhibition "Kayserzinn Pewter."

The natural world was a source of inspiration for Art Nouveau artists, many of whom gave linear expression to organic forms. Leven instead attempted to discover a material's expressive qualities. In his emphatically three-dimensional pieces, sculptural forms replaced applied decoration, the malleable metal evoking quivering muscles, perhaps, or creatures from the bottom of the sea. This intense organic vitality contrasted sharply with the engraving and medallions that traditionally adorned pewter.

Occasionally, a piece was made more acceptable by the addition of a rosette or a plant motif, but generally representation was avoided. Despite the absence of explicit imagery, the pieces can be startlingly bizarre. Gothic in spirit, the novel and fantastic shapes appear to be melting under their own weight. They provoke a mood of uneasiness in contrast with the exuberance of French work of this period. The pewter faithfully

conveys the modelling of the supple clay, enriching the objects with an immediate physicality. One understands the design through touch as fingers find their way into the impressions left by the sculptor, reexperiencing in effect the piece's creation.

Kayserzinn has affinities with the eccentric forms by George Ohr and Tiffany that were executed as unique craft objects. But although the Kayserzinn designs appear handmade, they were produced industrially. The smooth, simplified forms lent themselves to repeated casts of identical units. Prototypes made in Cologne were assigned model numbers and sent to Krefeld to be manufactured. Engelbert Kayser's progressive thinking included the development of a safe lead-free alloy for his utilitarian products. Most works were sold with a dark matte patina and the buyer had the option of polishing them to a velvety luster in imitation of silver.

In spite of its relatively short period of existence, Kayserzinn received considerable international recognition, winning gold medals at the Paris and St. Louis world fairs of 1900 and 1904, respectively, and at the 1902 international exposition of decorative arts in Turin. They were even available through mailorder catalogues. Originally introduced as a substitute for silver, pewter was never as reverently regarded. Its consistency dictated less refined design solutions than for silver, and Leven excelled in his use of the material precisely because his forms exploited pewter's unique qualities. The firm's demise shortly before World War I was purportedly due to the increased cost of tin, the main ingredient of pewter, but the waning of pewter's use was inevitably due to a preference for glass and ceramic ware, and in particular to the advent of relatively inexpensive silver plate.

The Art Nouveau style proper, radical in its time, seems overly sweet to us today, but there is something decidedly different about Kayserzinn designs. Though compatible with other decorative works from the period, their lack of specific imagery contributes to their enduring quality; their significance today may be principally in the way their abstract imagery anticipated German Expressionism.

Above
Hugo Leven and Hermann Fauser
Jardiniere
pewter, 8½ x 17¼ x 8¼"
1902 – 1903
Collection: The Museum of Modern Art, Estee and Joseph Lauder Design Fund

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Cara McCarty is Associate Curator in the Department of Architecture and Design at The Museum of Modern Art, New York.

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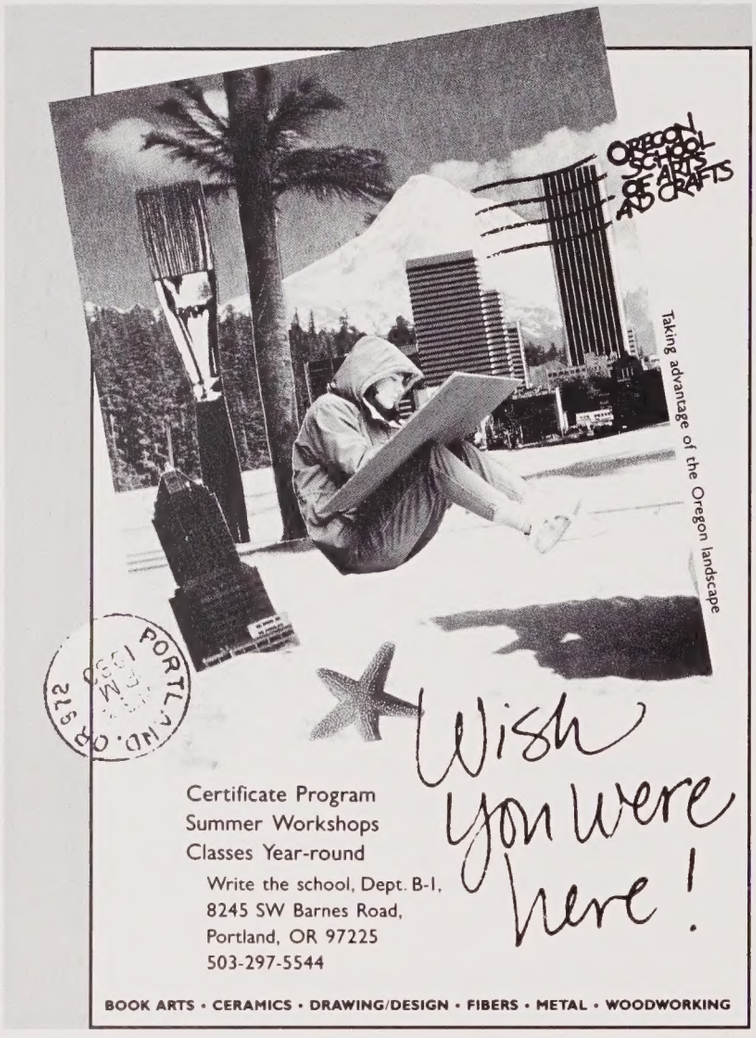

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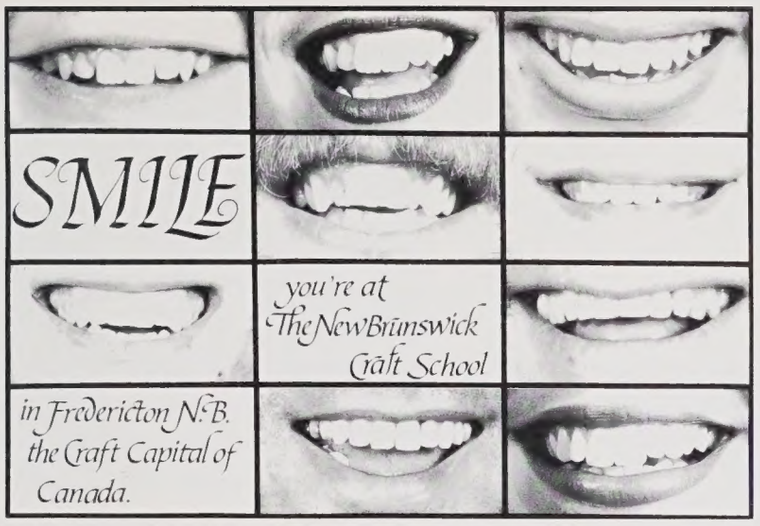

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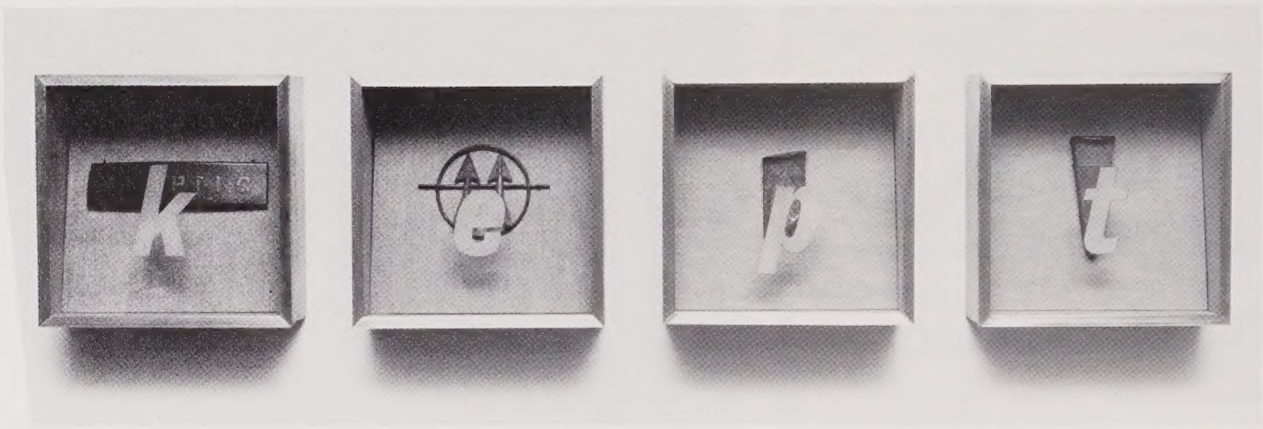


Above
Kept, brass, linen, steel, glass, wood
each 16 x 16 x 16"

Right
Grope, metal objects with brass, wood
4 x 4 x 12"
Photo: D. James Dee

Pamela Lins: *A Kept Object*

BACA Downtown, Brooklyn, NY
October 20 – November 18, 1989

by Lisa Reden

The show is comprised of five works, each consisting of object groupings and/or vessels. In each work, the objects and vessels are contained within a certain prescribed space, displayed upon a platform or within a structure. The objects relate well to each other. The forms are varied and engaging, while the surfaces have been worked with obvious care and knowledge of patination.

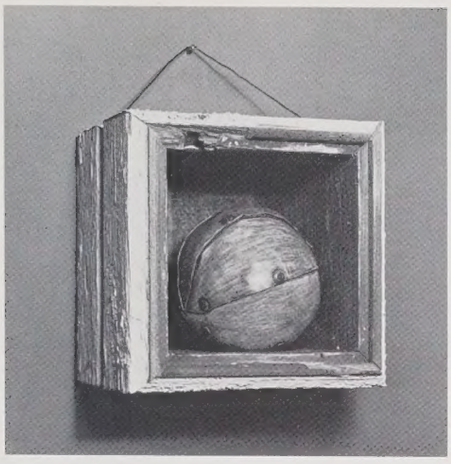
Still Life is composed of seven vessels carefully arranged on a wooden platform. Lead, copper, gold, brass and steel have been used for vessels where the emphasis is on the warm colors and subtle textures, rather than a cold, reflective surface. Each vessel moves with a gentle rising and falling of the surface that breaks with its primary geometry. Romanticizing a given moment in the past, each piece is set as an idealized alchemist lab. Fluid spilled from the beakers and flasks has left its trace in stains on to the objects themselves but does not interact with its surroundings. These objects have a purely esthetic role and are kept at a distance from the viewer, in a desire to leave this idealized moment intact.

In another work, each of five found objects placed on a wooden ironing board has a single brass letter attached to it, spelling "Grope." The forms are full, rounded and familiar, yet out of context on the ironing board, they are difficult to place. Bicycle seat, pitcher and funnel are easily identified. On the left, however, the form might be a car headlight; on the right, possibly a cow bell. The surfaces of these objects are smooth, worn by time, with signs of rust and erosion. The impulse is to feel them, pick them up like irons off the ironing board.

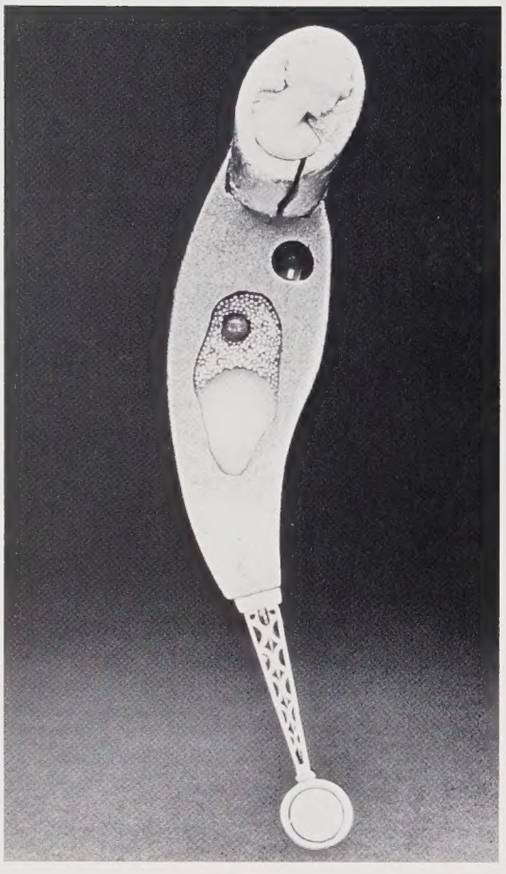
Kept consists of four boxes of wood, glass, linen and steel which are mounted onto the wall. Each box has a single, crisp letter sandblasted into its glass surface, so that the four boxes form the word "kept." Each of the boxes contain a steel object, the first with the word "skeptic" raised from its surface.

I am reminded of Japanese esthetics – simplicity, irregularity, perishability and suggestion when viewing Lins's work. Simplicity comes through in the forms she achieves, their muted colors and arrangement. Irregularity is her delight in imperfections, which altogether make a rich surface. Bumps, scratches and rusted areas, in contrast with smooth worn sections, connote the perishability of things. Time erodes their physical presence, but these objects still suggest value and beauty in their need to be kept and appreciated.

Lisa Reden is a jewelry designer and artist living in New York City.



Mark Hartung
Ball in a Box
copper, colored pencil, wood, paint, 6 x 6 x 5"
Photo: Gary Pelkey
Courtesy
Owen Patrick Gallery



Alan Burton Thompson
Balance brooch
cameo, cork, 22k gold leaf, 24k gold plate, basswood, paint, glitter
4½ x 1¼ x ½"
Photo: the artist,
Courtesy
Owen Patrick Gallery

Gretchen Goss, Mark Hartung, Alan Burton Thompson

Owen Patrick Gallery, Philadelphia, PA
November 4 – 22, 1989

by Holly Goeckler and Myra Mimlitsch Gray

Gretchen Goss is an enamelist who concentrates on large-scale paneled wall-pieces. The size of these pieces is impressive, considering the technical challenges of the medium. The combination of layered, enamel surfaces, patterns, textures and colors is very rich. In some instances, she is able to bring a spontaneous, gestural quality to the work, such as a brush stroke, through the tedious process of enameling.

Ponds (68" x 25") is an example of Goss's use of applied shapes and muted palette to create a decorative interpretation of the natural world. This piece succeeds because the palette and subject matter are complementary. Unlike other pieces in the show, *Ponds* does not attempt to evoke more than a simple appreciation of formal design and technique. Goss is less successful when she approaches more serious subject matter. Her *Memorial Pieces #1* and *#2* are styles bits of emotion. In *Memorial Piece #2* (12" x 36"), she presents the ghostly image of a dog in his house, with a title suggestive of love and loss. However, her treatment of a seemingly heartfelt subject becomes banal and merely decorative, insensitive to the shift in subject matter.

Mark Hartung's work consists of forms derived from vessels and toys. His vertical vessels evolve from a direct approach to sheet-metal working, such as rolling long, tapered cylinders and fastening the seams with pop rivets. The compositions of these pieces involve the simple stacking of geometric patterns. The painting adds whimsy to the object; however, the base remains static. The decorative patterns on the objects serve to enhance the metal construction technique. For example, Hartung carefully develops the patterns around each rivet, which both draws attention to and distracts from the simplicity of the cold connection.

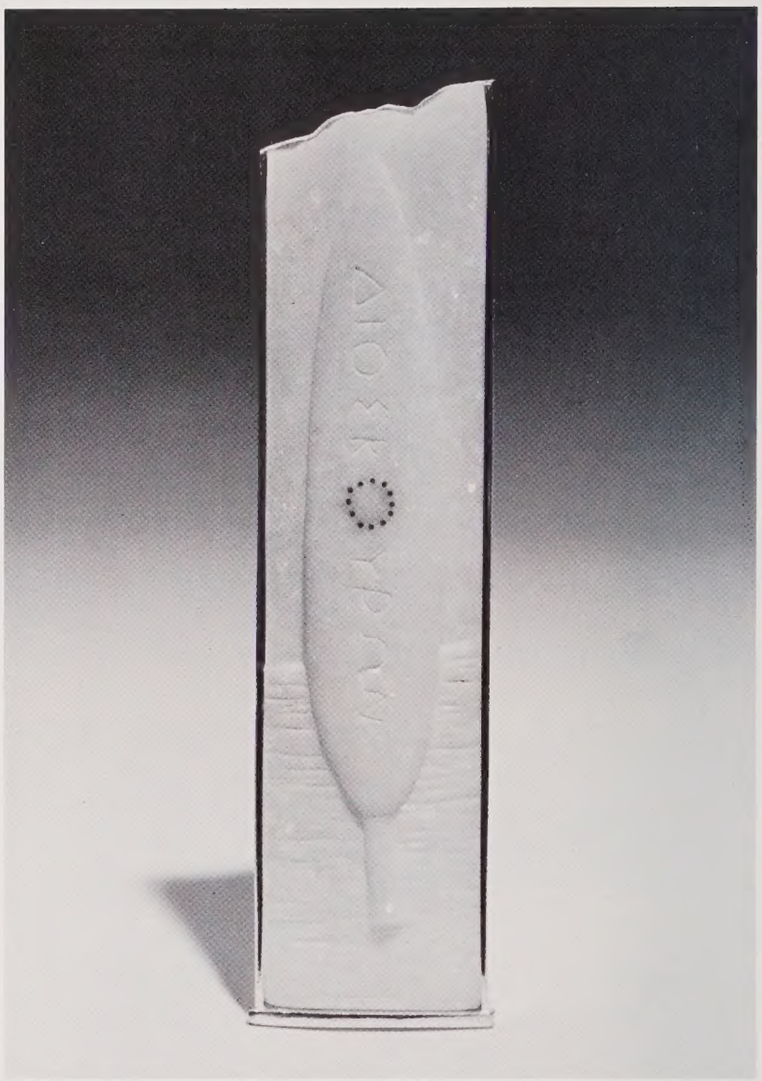
The toy pieces are more successful because they indicate a purpose, while the vessels are incidental, the result of sheet metal manipulation. The playfully painted surface supports the toy reference, while it merely decorates the exterior of the vessel. Hartung's most successful piece is *Ball in a Box*. The ball is constructed of crudely folded and riveted metal patches and presented in an equally crude box made from found scraps of wood molding. The coarse materials become precious because of their association with the nostalgia of childhood games. The roughness suggests a toy well used and well loved. The box becomes a niche that establishes the ball as an object of importance.

Alan Burton Thompson's work is the most challenging and enigmatic in the exhibition. The pieces are collages of appropriated objects and images in a variety of materials, assembled as brooches. Initially enticing due to its richness, the work results from an ecclectic combination of materials coupled with a strong regard for craftsmanship. By gluing opals and gold-leafing plastic, Burton Thompson creates a new context in which the viewer's perception of preciousness can be altered.

Many of the found objects Alan Burton Thompson uses are borrowed from popular culture, such as the plastic rose, the heart and the cameo. Other elements of the work are fabricated by the artist. Tension is established in the ambiguity between the handmade and the manufactured. The pieces are most successful when both are combined so that the viewer does not distinguish between the found and the fabricated and is therefore free to wonder about the meanings of these combined elements, rather than their origins.

The use of recognizable images and universal symbols offers a narrative, where viewers can realize a personal meaning in each piece. However, the repetition of images and materials contributes to a loss of meaning; what could be seen as sincere in one work becomes cliche when it reappears unaltered in different contexts. What results is often formal inquiry with the pretense of meaning. Thompson's ability to combine materials into a coherent form does not always result in the transformation of parts into a whole. For instance, *Boat* fails to transcend its material origins, remaining a kitsch collage, while *Balance* becomes an elegant vehicle for metaphorical interpretation. *Hoop Ghost, Drift Ghost* and *Grace I* are equally as effective, but one must question the obvious phallic nature of their overall form. This aspect of the work is accentuated by the overlaying of such feminine images as the heart and cameo portrait, which leads one to further scrutinize the artist's intent.

Holly Goeckler is a metalsmith, living in New Hope, PA and teaching metalsmithing at Beaver College. Myra Mimlitsch Gray lives in Philadelphia and teaches metalsmithing at the University of the Arts: Philadelphia College of Art and Design.



Corfu Memorial Brooch
sterling silver, 18k gold, Greek marble
3⅜ x ⅞ x ¼"

Randy Long

Susan Cummins Gallery, Mill Valley, CA
October 2 – 28, 1989

by Roberta Floden

An ardent student of antiquities, Randy Long visited Greece for the first time this past summer. Inspired by the sculpture, fragments and shards seen on her trip, she decided to adopt marble as her material of choice for brooches and pendants.

Needless to say, marble is rarely used in contemporary jewelry. Few jewelers are prepared to spend the time and effort to learn the slow, laborious techniques – chiseling and carving – it demands. These processes become even more exacting when reducing a material, identified with architecture and sculpture, to wearable size. Nevertheless, using a controlled, designerly approach, she has mastered marble's sensuous, intimate, even delicate properties.

Long does not work marble into a jewelry that contemporizes the material. She doesn't extend marble beyond its proven territory, nor does she reinterpret form and content. Instead, she has examined the traditional functions of marble and made direct translations into miniature form, linking her very wearable designs with historical and cultural references.

Practically all of the brooches on exhibit are reminiscent of classical marble bas-reliefs. These pieces are secured in gold and silver bezels, with richly finished reverse surfaces. Although they offer few surprises, they resonate with an ageless sense of beauty. Several are "goddess brooches" – pink or white marble, female torsos draped in flowing togas. The lines of her *Drapery Brooch* echo the material of a falling curtain. Others are in the classical shapes of vases, amphora and shields, some carved with archetypal symbols and some embedded with gold.

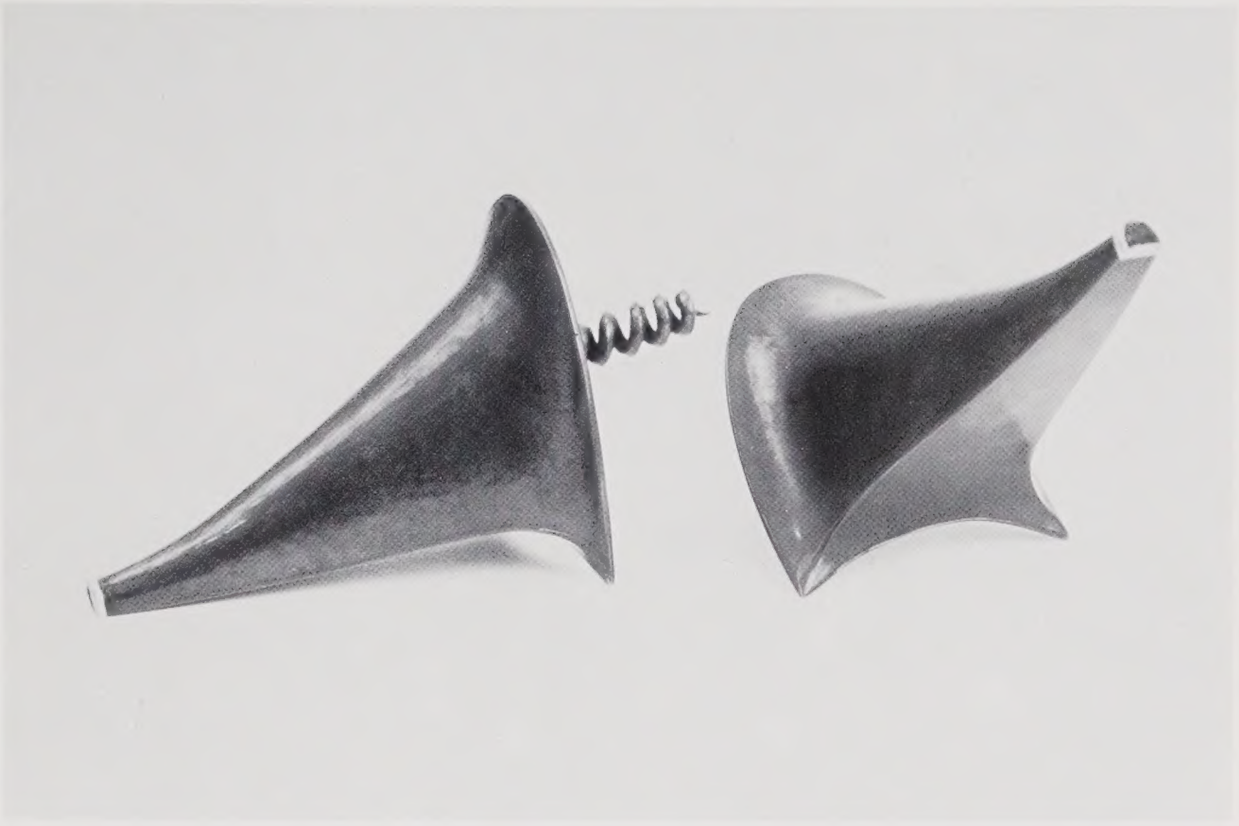
Corfu Memorial Brooch features a delicately carved feather in a pillar fragment. On the feather, seen only in certain angles of light, are finely chiseled hieroglyphics and a circle of gold nails. This compelling piece shimmers with an air of mystery. Yet, its materials, form and content directly acknowledge the classical influences from which they are drawn.

Even more successful are two pendants of an abstract nature, hanging simply on leather thongs. Although the designs on these pendants are less identifable as classical imagery, they are nonetheless born in antiquity. *La Figura Otto Pendant* is the "infinity" design chiseled in white marble that has been shaped like a "figure eight." *Semente Pendant* (Seed Pendant) has two rounded, seedlike, symmetrical shapes held together in a gold brace. Because they are more ambiguous in form and universal in content, these two transcend time and place and have an esthetic all their own.

There is nothing contrived in Long's designs. Even her leaf necklace with its 31 hammered-silver leaves, and the matching earrings, are totally accessible. Her stylized, silver "pomegranate" earrings resonate with understatement and simplicity as well.

Randy Long's work is formal, spare, clean and extremely tactile. She has a concern for refinement of form and is most cognizant of the effectiveness of contour and reflection. Her work is rhythmic rather than unpredictable, stable rather than in flux, reposed rather than tense, soft rather than hard-edged. A marriage of thought and process to material, Long's jewelry demonstrates skill, balance and a personal style, rich with historical meaning. While this is an understandably small show, with no more than 12 pieces; it is also one of the more elegant exhibits this gallery has mounted.

Roberta Floden is a writer living in San Anselmo, CA.

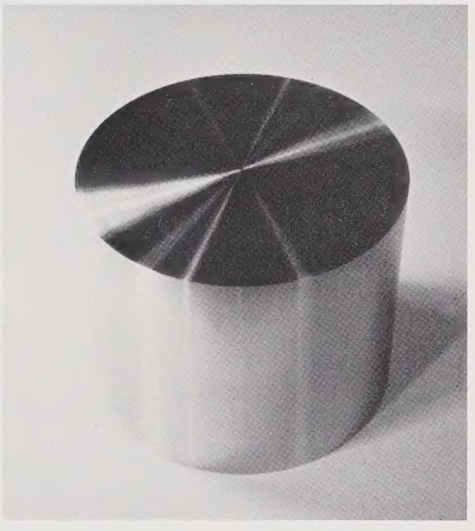


Myra Mimlitsch Gray
Heels
copper, bronze, silver, garnets
3 x 4.75 x 3"

Function — Non-Function

Rezac Gallery, Chicago, IL
October 13 – November 14, 1989

by Catherine Jacobi



Otto Künzli
Container
stainless steel, 5.5" h., 6⅝" d.

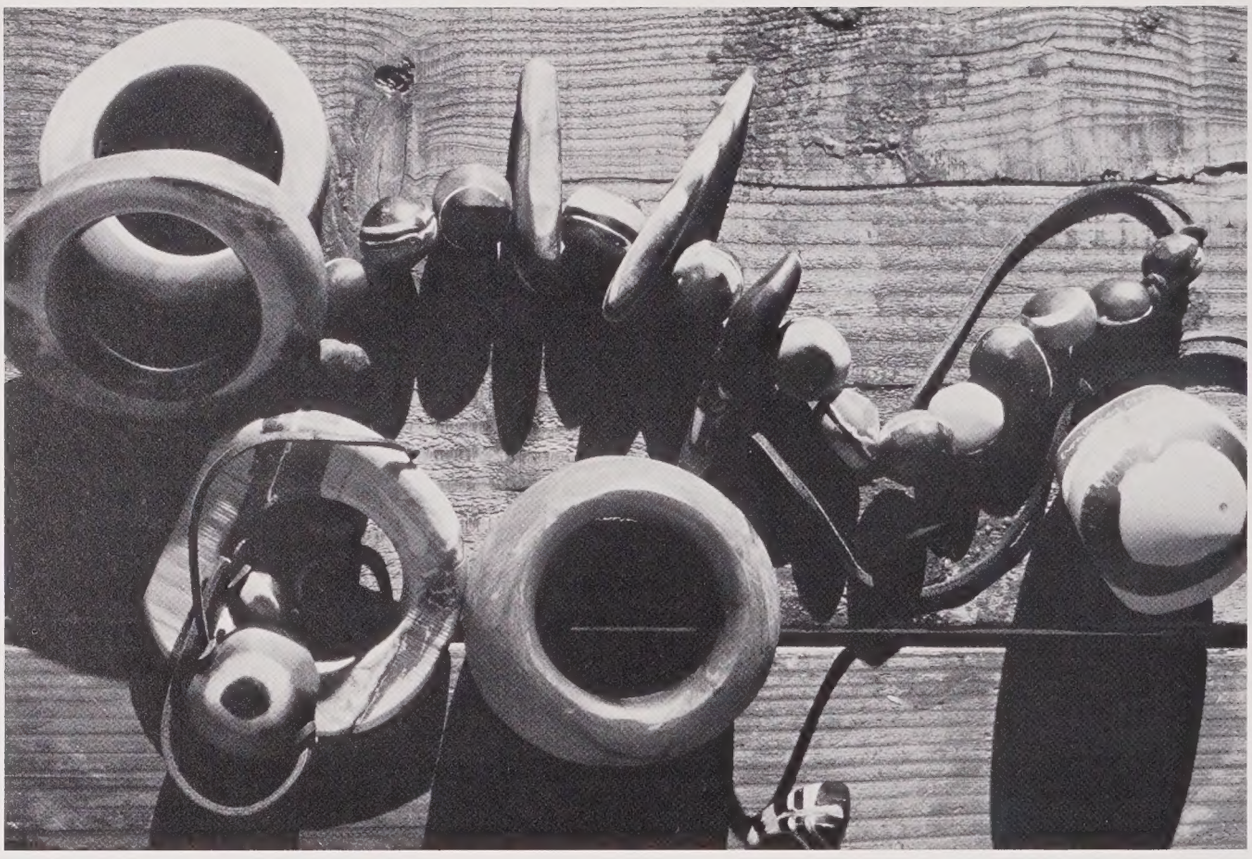
The Rezac Gallery has organized an exhibition that genuinely discusses the contextual function and the specific function of objects. "Function-Non-Function" approaches function through an inquiry of the essential definition of an object. This is not an investigation of the status or categorization of objects as fine art or craft. Rather, it describes function as what each individual object necessarily does best, autonomously and contextually. The catalog that accompanies the exhibition has an essay by playwrite David Sedaris that augments the premise with a fictional account woven around the topic of function.

Works by Myra Mimlitsch-Gray, Joan Parcher, Gabriele Dziuba, Therese Hilbert, Gerd Rothman and Rebecca Batal reference a metalsmithing tradition while functioning as criticisms of jewelry and ornamentation. Mimlitsch-Gray's *Heels* displaces cultural concepts of ornamentation and gender representation in a pair of bronze stiletto heels with set garnets in their base and threatening corkscrews at the top. While the cultural function of the average high-heel is essentially a female iconic representation, Mimlitsch-Gray reveals how this can be supported by a real sense of pain and futility.

Works by Michael Rowe, Otto Künzli, Christopher Jünger, Michael Becker, Richard Rezac, Mary Brogger and Robin Quigley have utilized constructive or casting techniques to support the discussions of various subjects. Michael Rowe's "cylindrical vessel" simultaneously references the bowl and the hat. By layering the form with a tinned patina that appears wet, Rowe furthers the duplicity of the form by creating a paradox in the way that it functions – it at once repels, as it contains. As with much of Otto Künzli's work, a schism exists between perception and reality. With his *Container* Künzli presents the perfectly turned, stainless-steel cylinder that, without prior knowledge of flawlessly fitted cover and base, would appear solid.

For other artists such as Tony Tasset, Hirsh Perlman, Kevin Maginnis and Joan Brossa, the traditions of metalsmithing, if at all referenced, are remote in comparison with other premises. Tony Tasset's *Cover* is critical of the way we are or are not able to read objects in an art context. This work approaches the larger concern of the exhibition – how the metaphoric and literal reading of an object can describe its function.

Catherine Jacobi is a sculptor and writer living in Chicago.



Bangles, Cuff and Necklace
cast polyester resin
Photo: William Laxton

Cara Croninger

Artwear, New York City
October 17 – 31, 1989

by Carolyn Kriegman

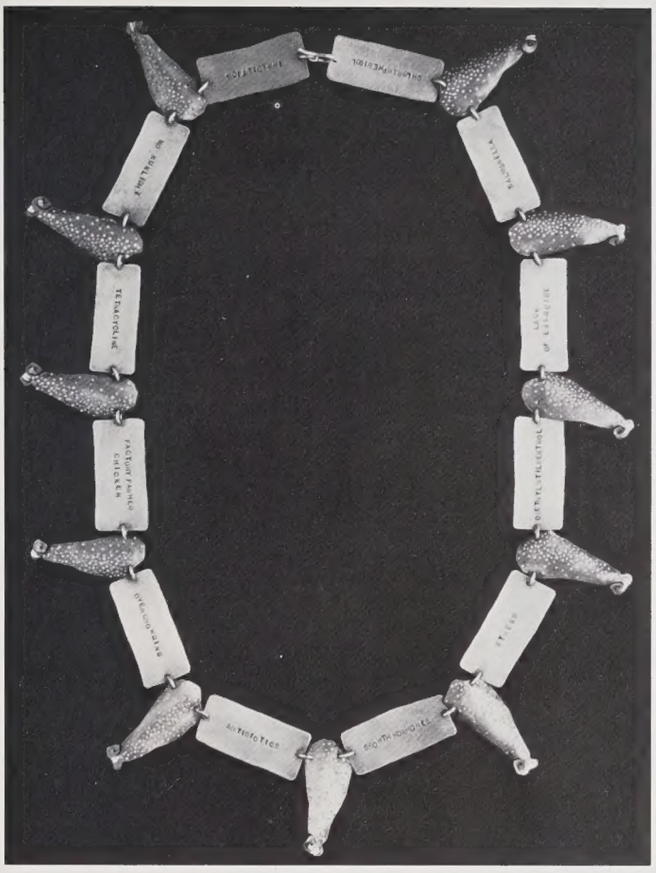
The scale of Cara Croninger's objects-to-wear is assertive, certainly not kind to the self-conscious, insecure or fashion-addicted. It may cut a customer or two out of her market, but it also suggests an artist of adventurous spirit. Croninger's big bracelets, for example, can't be forced through the sleeves of most winter coats, but during their momentary doffings, they do service as small sculptures.

All her forms are simple, consequential. Edges and heft have been manipulated with saw and files, hammer and chisels, polish or sandblasting, Necklaces are also substantial, most often composed of large, abstract, rounded or toothlike, sometimes rectangular or shardlike beads, strung on heavy, knotted, silken cords, whose ends have been selectively frayed. Whether using sheet acrylic or cast polyester-resin, Croninger evolves shapes working from the outside inward. In the stronger pieces, she has layered colors into the clear resin by adding dyes and metallic powders during the casting process. Crosses with embedded lace and newsprint, and pendants with assorted cast-in messages – "change, hope, revolution, my brothers, my sisters, struggle, choice" – though they figured prominently on the postcard invitation for the show, seemed an undeveloped, confusing, even half-hearted political/social/intellectual/religious aside from her other work.

While Croninger may begin with distinct projects in mind, as she casts the polyester blocks, she manages to retain and communicate an enlivening dose of spontaneity in the finished pieces. Machinery and chemistry are inherent factors in this very contemporary group of materials, yet Croninger's interpretation hums with an upbeat, upscale ethnic and historic resonance, not an easy balance to achieve. Many of her works would adapt handsomely to native American or African rituals, or conversely to a ballet accompanied by a Philip Glass score, for that matter. That isn't to suggest for a moment that they're costume.

The predilection for enlarged scale attests to Croninger's gutsy self-confidence, though in opting for bigger, she sometimes is confronted with heavier. No question, her collectors must come to this work with their personal identities in tact. There remains no choice but to dress to the jewelry; it will not accept accessory status.

Carolyn Kriegman is a paper artist and writer living in New Jersey.



Catherine Butler

Mobilia Gallery, Cambridge, MA
October 17 – November 17, 1989

by Susan Barahal

Left
Factory Farmed Chicken Necklace
brass, nickel, silver, colored epoxy inlay
Photo: Stephen A. Butler

Right
Free Range Organic Cornfed Chicken
silver, copper, brass, clay beads
Photo: Stephen A. Butler

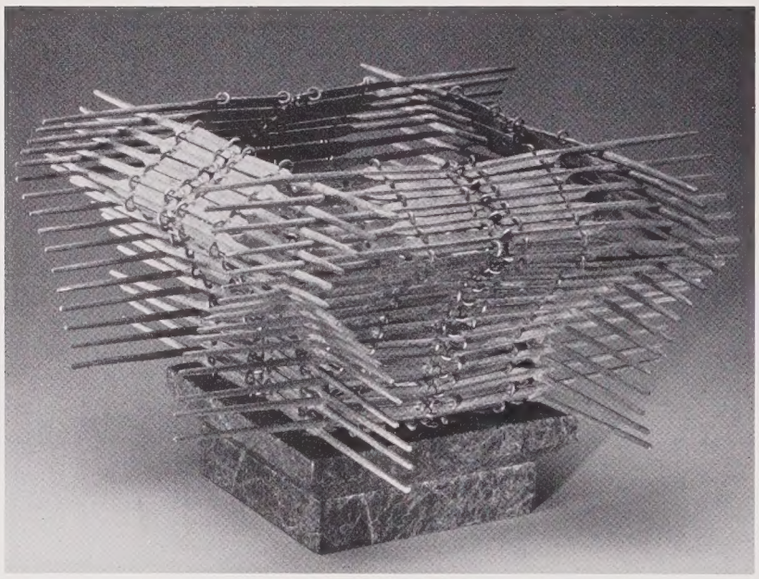
Catherine Butler's jewelry can be divided into two groups: those that are primarily decorative, reflecting the artist's interest in nature and fantasy, and those that make provocative statements, rooted in the tradition of social commentary.

Butler's affinity for nature is evident in a series of garden pins that are stylized tributes to flowers. Brass is shaped to form leaves, and antique Venetian glass beads create blossoms. However, in *Magic Carpet*, she departs from the natural world and touches on the supernatural. Brass and copper have been worked to create a sense of movement. The carpet undulates and captures the few seconds before landing or takeoff. The pin is designed to be worn on the shoulder, which appropriately serves as a launch pad or landing strip. The artist's ability to suggest movement is rivaled by her intricate rendering of the carpet's surface. Ornate patterns are etched and filled with colored epoxy to create the magical, jewel-like designs of Oriental rugs.

It is when Butler focuses on the real world that she is most effective. Two neckpieces, *Factory Farmed Chicken* and *Free Range Organic Cornfed Chicken*, call attention to the controversy of using chemicals in farming. *Factory Farmed Chicken* consists of uniform chicken parts that appear mass-produced. Each silver piece is colored with purple and blue spots, exaggerating their inorganic nature. These parts alternate with dull, metal, rectangular shapes. Written on each is the name of a chemical, hormone or malady. The words are stamped by using commercial letter punches, recalling military dog tags. And, like dog tags, these plates confirm that the chicken parts, like the soldiers, have been processed and serve as positive identification. In contrast, *Free Range Organic Cornfed Chicken* is plump and healthy. Standing with outstretched wings, it is living proof of the benefits of organic farming.

The role of the farmer is quietly acclaimed in another neckpiece, *Hidden Farmers*. Earth-colored beads form a multistrand necklace. The beads' colors, shapes and abundance seem to refer to the earth, its grains and harvest. But, while the body of this piece suggests the essence of the land, it is the clasp, depicting figures of farmers, that symbolically and literally holds everything together. Fabricated from copper sheet, this group of jovial farmers stands proudly. Each farmer holds a shaft of wheat, like a patriot waves the flag. However, there is no fanfare. The farmers, functioning as a clasp, are worn at the back of one's neck and are "behind the scenes" in this testimonial to the archetypal American.

Susan Barahal is the Decorative Arts Editor for Art New England Magazine *and teaches art in the Boston Area.*



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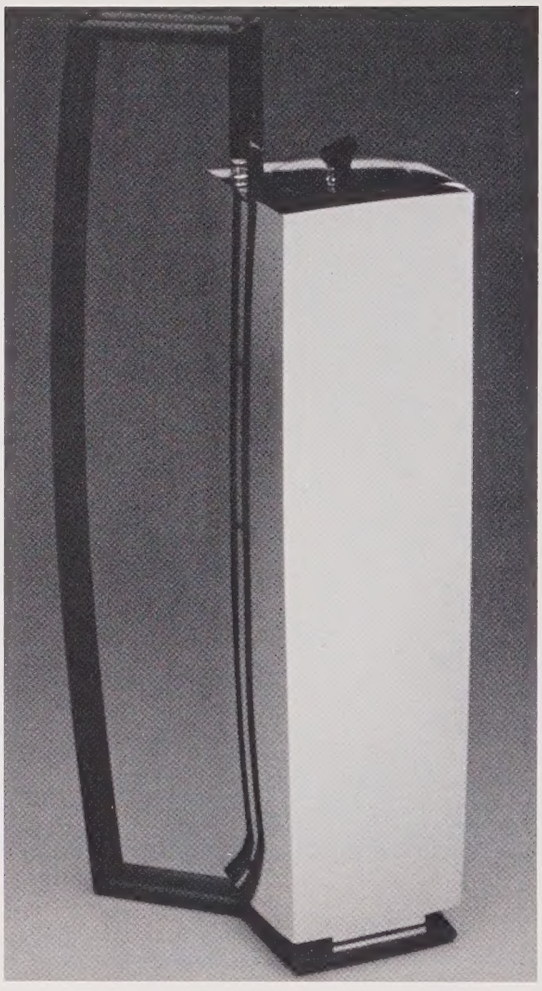

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Silver
New Forms and Expressions

Fortunoff, New York City
October 2 – 22, 1989

by Janet Koplos

The title of Fortunoff's competitive and invitational silver exhibition is perfect. The "New Forms" part indicates an unrestricted play with materials, while the "and Expressions" phrase opens the door to art aspirations. Underlying them both are the big questions that no one wants to ask because no one can answer them: Is there a form that defines our time, as Art Deco captured the streamlined modernity of the Jazz Age? What expresses late 20th century?

The works shown at Fortunoff are characterized by the appeal of an heirloom without the allure of standard forms. "Form follows function" has been abandoned, and not replaced by another form-motivating concept. Filling this conceptual void, by and large, is conspicuous virtuosity, a showy "how" instead of "why."

That's the case in both the juried and the invitational parts of the show (the invitational works are distinguished on the exhibition price list and in the catalog, but not on the display labels). Perhaps it can be seen with particular clarity in the first-prize winner, a teapot on stand by Charles Adam Crowley. It would seem that Crowley won for an unexpected way to store a teapot. It's not "sensible," but it's striking, and in our complex and transient relationships with the objects that surround us, that is (completely apart from the question of whether it should be) a measure of value.

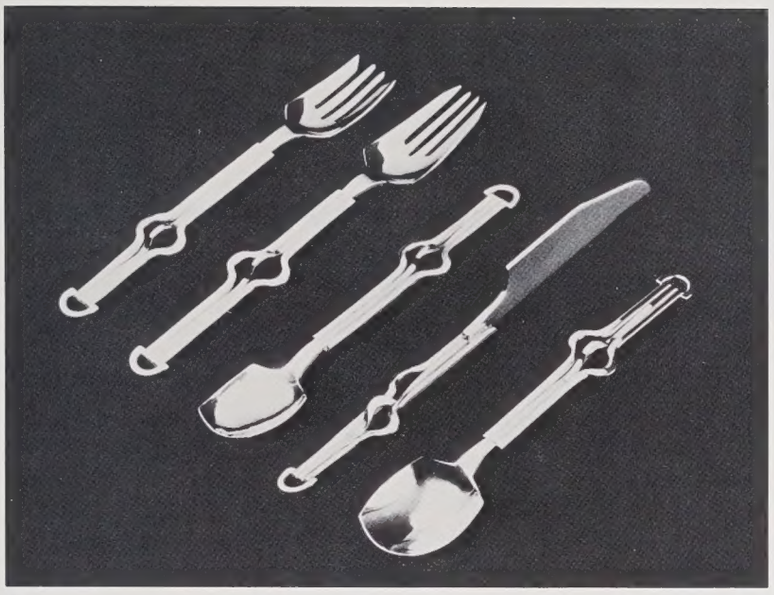
Nearly all the work in this show can be praised for technique and for imagination, and much of it is admirable if judged within the narrow confines of "contemporary metalsmithing." As rare in this show as in the world at large are examples of well-developed form that is beautiful and/or practical.

Among those is Yosuke Inoue's coffee pot. It's hardly what one would call a standard form. It makes me think of a butler with sclerosis. The extreme curve gives it a certain energy that is held in check by the propriety of the surfaces and materials. I think the only straight lines in this pot are the lid hinge, at the top back, and its visual echo, the back edge of the base. Just as these two lines resonate from top to bottom, so the plethora of curves repeat or reflect each other. All this interest does not violate the requirement of function: the pot still looks as if it would be easy to use. Inoue earned an honorable mention.

An equally successful coffee server by Thomas L. Martell is another well-deserved honorable mention, although one wonders at the $13,500 pricetag, Martell makes use of a wide array of geometric forms. The vessel and its handle are both vertical rectangles but are not perfect mates – the handle is taller. The black of the handle against the silver of the container reads as negative/positive, outline/solid. Details show exquisite restraint: the spout is a tiny teardrop-shape opening in one corner; the lid is a perfectly circular disk. The whole is saved from preciousness by the slightly pneumatic profile, which gives it the breath of life.

A number of the juried works are humorous. It's interesting to see confidence to be light-hearted even though high-priced. This esthetic seems to derive from those heady days of nonprecious materials, but this show requires silver, so the material doesn't justify such handling. Still, if one refuses to think about cost, one can enjoy the wit of Mary Margaret Zeran's *Farm* flatware, shaped like rakes and shovels, or Kee-Ho Yuen's tea service modeled on paper bags (the third prize winner). The complex dynamism of Susan R. Ewing's *Bull's-Eye Teapot* leaves that organic image far behind leaning toward Pop art road signs. Jean Mandeberg's *Split* vessel is a simple bowl divided by seams with what appear to be interlockable tabs; the disjunctiveness gives it visual impact without precluding usefulness. On the other hand, the belabored construction of J. Steve Jordan's basket made of silver "quills" takes it out of the functional realm, but earned him the second prize anyway.

The invitational section includes more works by fewer artists (17 as opposed to the 20 juried entries). Two of the three judges for the exhibition – Jamie Bennett and Fred Fenster – are among the invitees. Kevin Stayton, of the department of decorative arts at the Brooklyn Museum, was the third juror.



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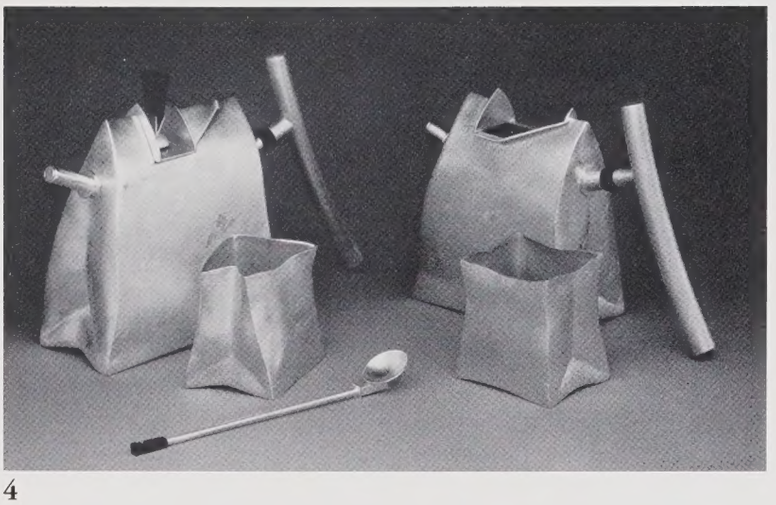

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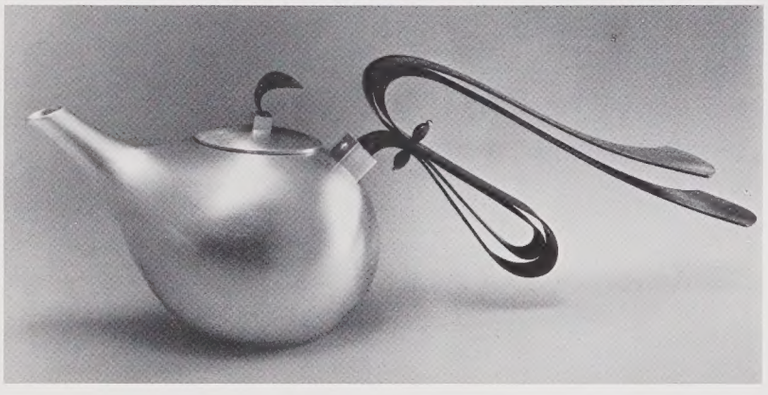

1. J. Steve Jordan, *Basket*, sterling and fine silver, patina, marble, 5 x 10 x 10"
2. Thomas Martell, *Coffee Server*, sterling silver, aluminum, 15 x 4 x 6"
3. John Marshall, *Place Setting*, sterling silver
4. Kee-Ho Yuen, *Tea Service*, silverplate on copper, ebony, pitcher 5.5 x 7.6 x 1"
5. Chunghi Choo, *Teapot*, electroformed silver, anodized aluminum handle, jade beads

Many of the invited works serve, as expected, as touchstones, and others represent the familiar esthetics of some of the best known names in American metalsmithing. Two exemplary works present an interesting contrast: Alma Eikerman's *Mocha Pot* and Chunghi Choo's *Teapot* are both small, irregular globes, restrained in both form and decoration, but the mood that they express is quite different. Eikerman's pot is a graceful, full, satisfying shape, precious because of its size. An ivory grip on the lid and a length of ivory on the handle are primarily functional, but in their precise relation, they also visually extend and balance the larger volume of silver. The pot, gourd-shaped to the extent that its outline is essentially triangular, is inversely reflected in the spout (starting fat and tapering to a small mouth) and the handle on the lid. Those three forms offer a continuum of triangles, starting at the organic end of the scale and ending at the machined end. The pot is a union of neat, distinct, balanced parts.

Choo's work, by contrast, consists of pot and spout as one seamless whole, and a lid that seems cut from the same fabric. This gives her pot a sweeping, uninterrupted line. That line is reiterated – or completed – in a flamboyantly oversize handle that doubles back on itself in a compressed S-shape. The effect of the whole is less like a teapot than like a tropical bird with a flowing tail, an association that is carried through in the jaunty feather-comb that flips back from the lid. The handle does not appear to be convenient to grip, but it makes a wonderful image.

Well-known metalsmiths showing characteristic works include J. Fred Woell, Helen Shirk, Ronald Hayes Pearson, Richard Mawdsley, Stanley Lechtzin and Arline Fisch. John Marshall's *Bloome* flatware (service for eight) is one of the more innovative approaches to function. The bowls, tines and blades of this flatware are consistent, but the handles of each place setting are different. Marshall seems to be freely playing with form. If he were a silver company designer, this might have been eight new designs, but because he is making them himself, a single five-piece place setting is sufficient to realize the idea. Like Choo's pot, this flatware tends to be more interesting than practical – it would be difficult to clean – and makes a strong impression as an exhibition form.

A jar and a casserole by Olaf Skoogfors are included. One wonders what the jurors meant by this inclusion. The forms are classic and timeless, yet few metalsmiths make classic and timeless objects today. If they did, they'd probably be attacked as commercial and unimaginative. Are these beautiful objects meant to comment on the excesses elsewhere? How can we regard "New Forms and Expressions" from a long-dead artist?

At an opposite pole from Skoogfors' classicism is juror Bennett's *The Seeker*. It's a sculpture, I suppose. At least it has no apparent function. It consists of a diminutive rendition of a checkerboard-top Parsons table finished in silver leaf. A vase with a dead stem in it lies on top. This object is really more pictorial than three-dimensional. It has a peculiarly passive and nostalgic tone. One wonders why it's an appropriate inclusion in this exhibition. Its minimal amount of silver qualifies it for the theme of the show, but it is definitely not functional and even measurably less decorative than the hackneyed surrealism of Keiko Kubota Miura's place setting. It's not entirely successful formally because it is so much weaker from the side (one tends to be conscious of the space underneath the table) than from the top view. But it has nice qualities of mystery and suggestiveness that make it worthy of consideration as an art object. There are lots of appropriate venues for such work, but a holloware and flatware exhibition at Fortunoff is not among them.

Fortunoff produced a free black-and-white catalog of the exhibition, including a jurors' statement and a brief essay by Vanessa Lynn. The company plans similar exhibitions in 1990 and 91.

Janet Koplos writes frequently on three-dimensional objects.

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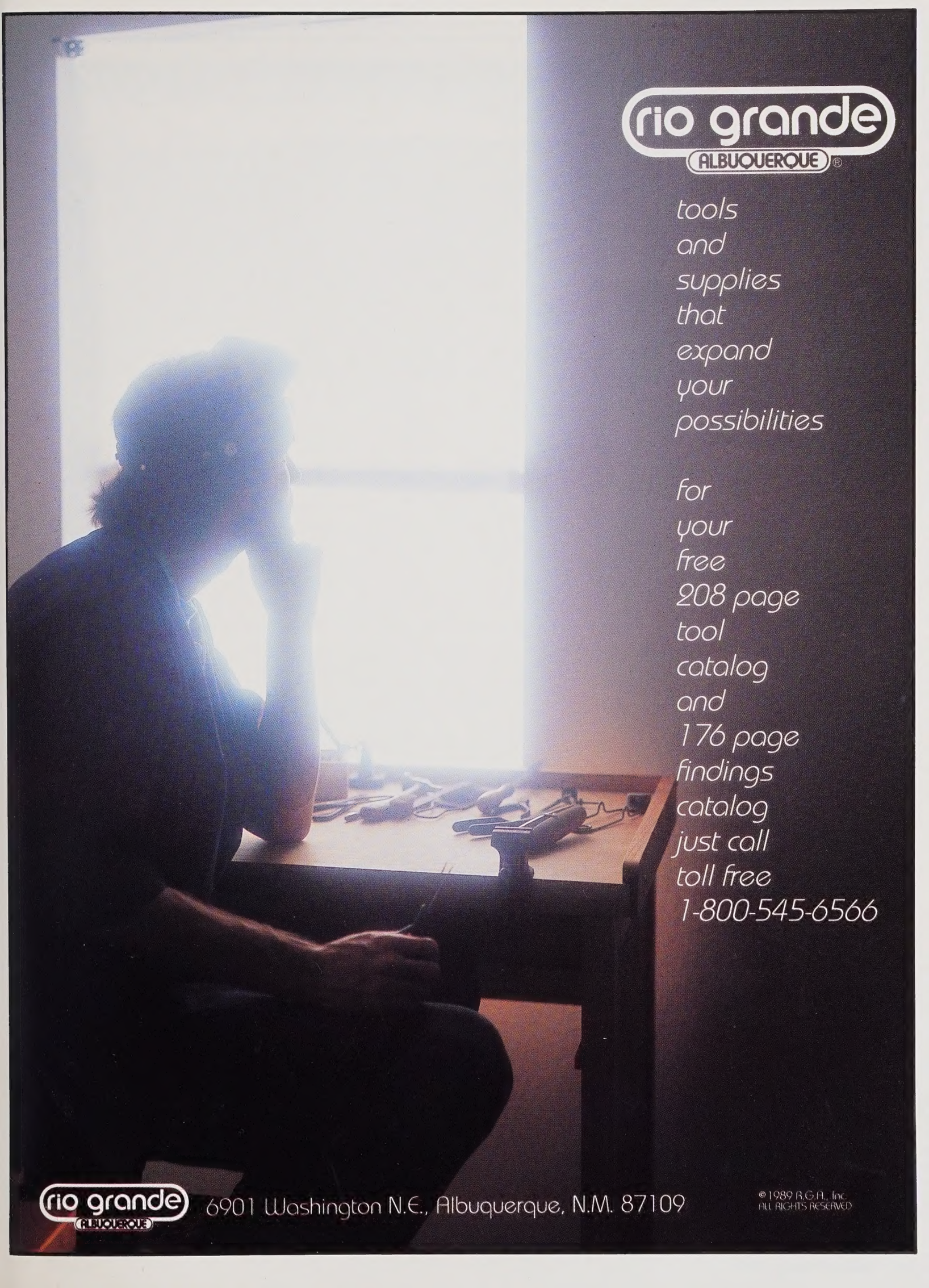
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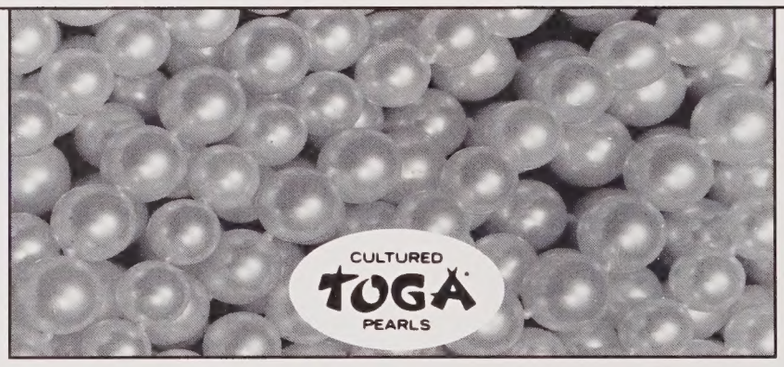

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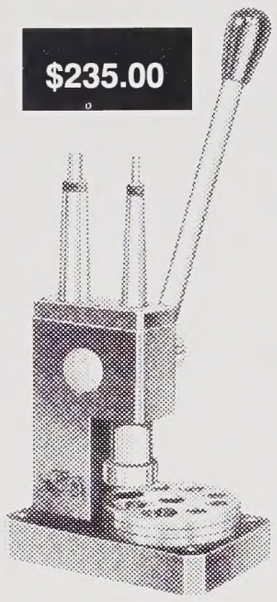

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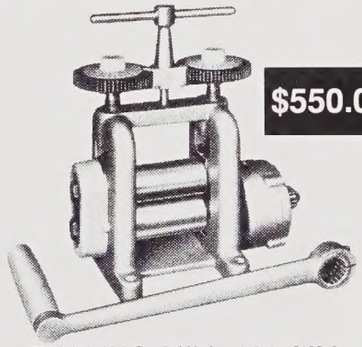

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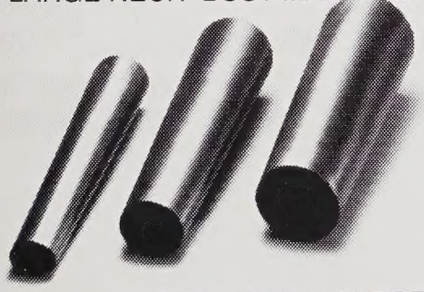

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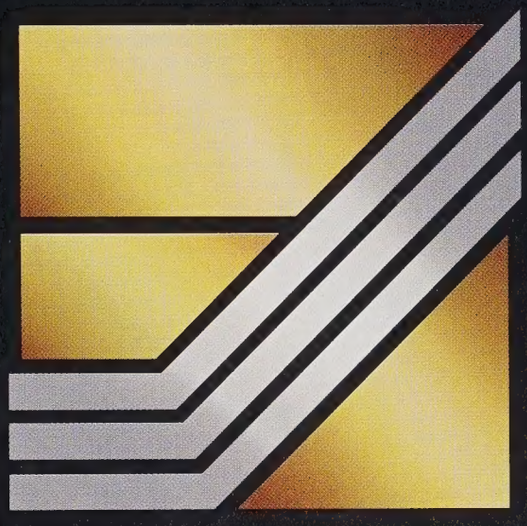

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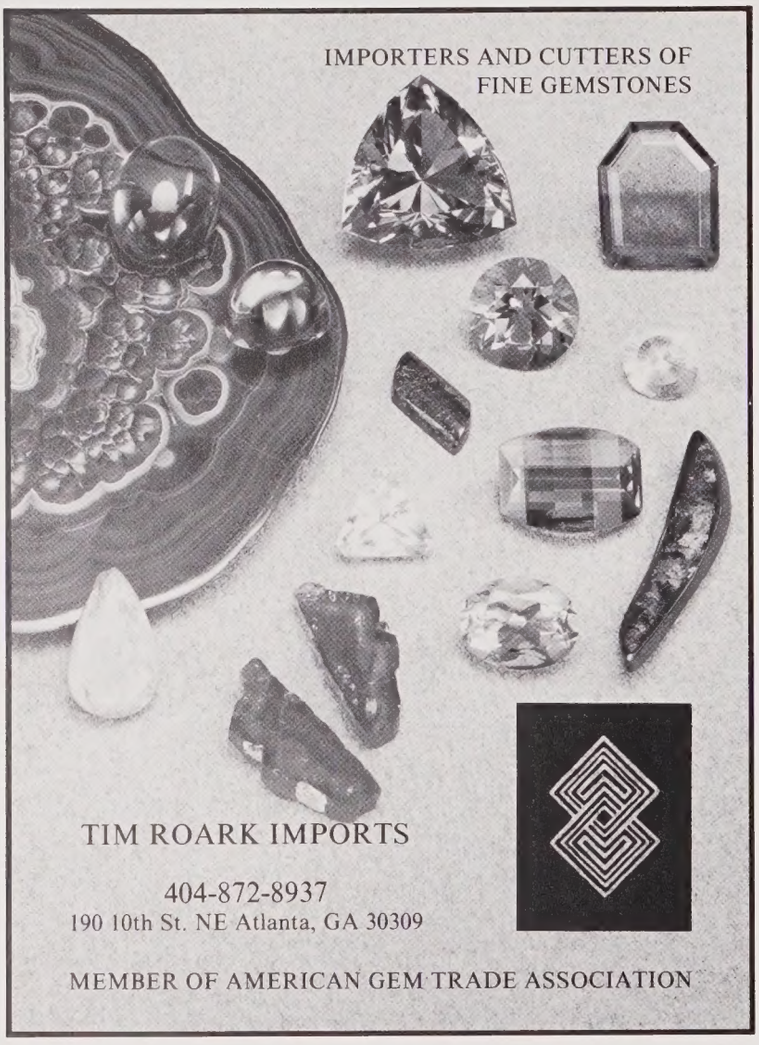

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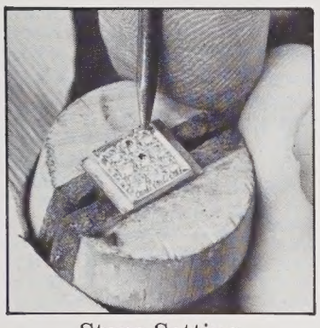
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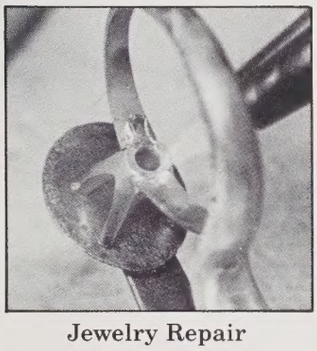
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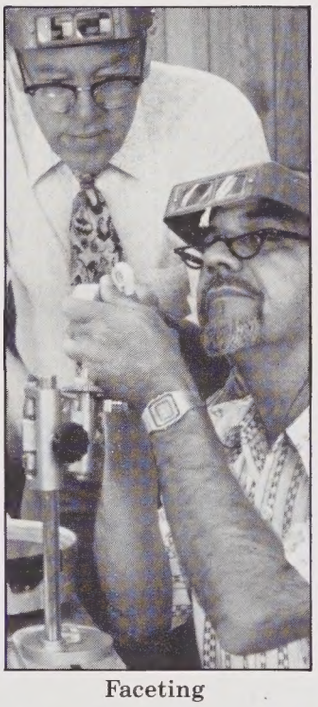
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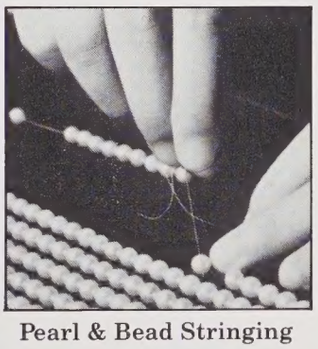
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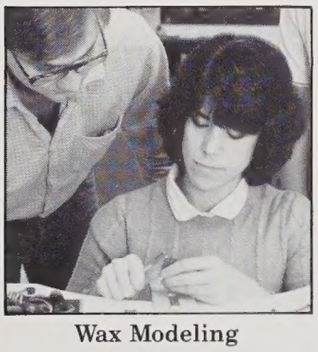
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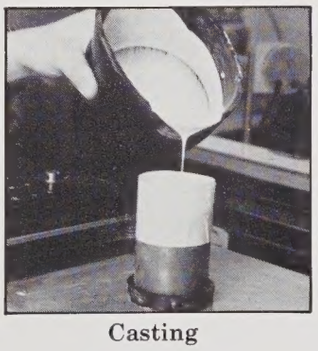
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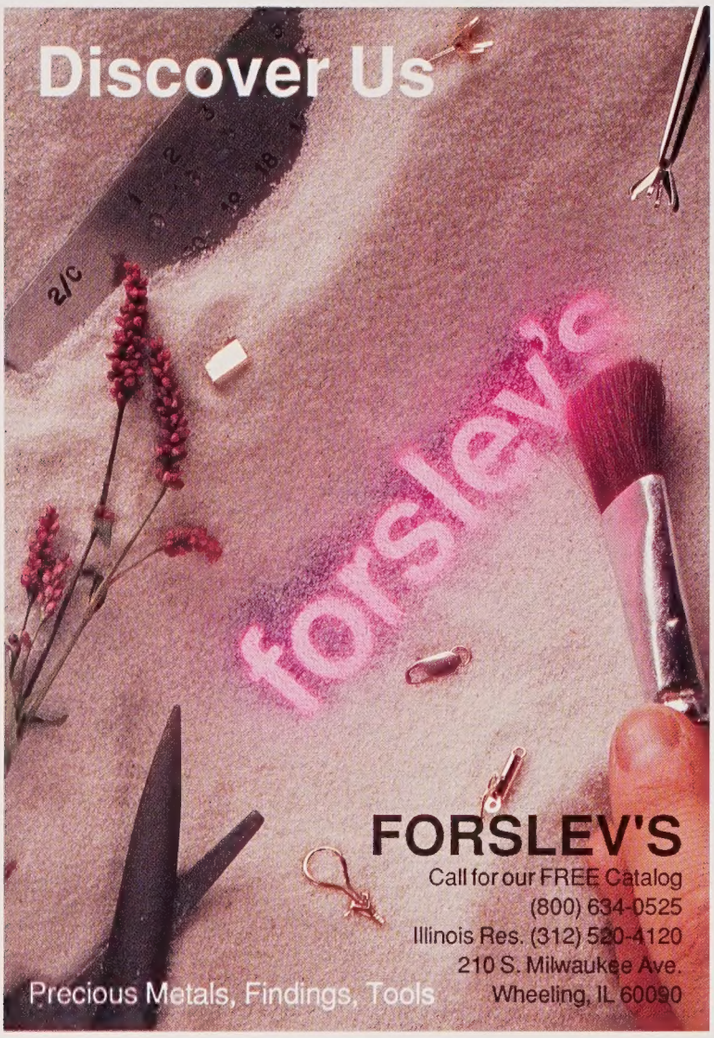

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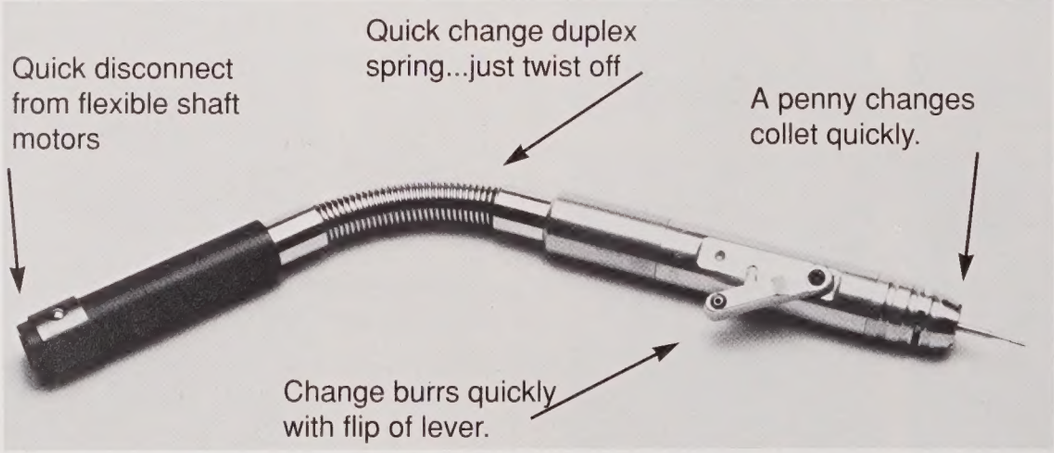
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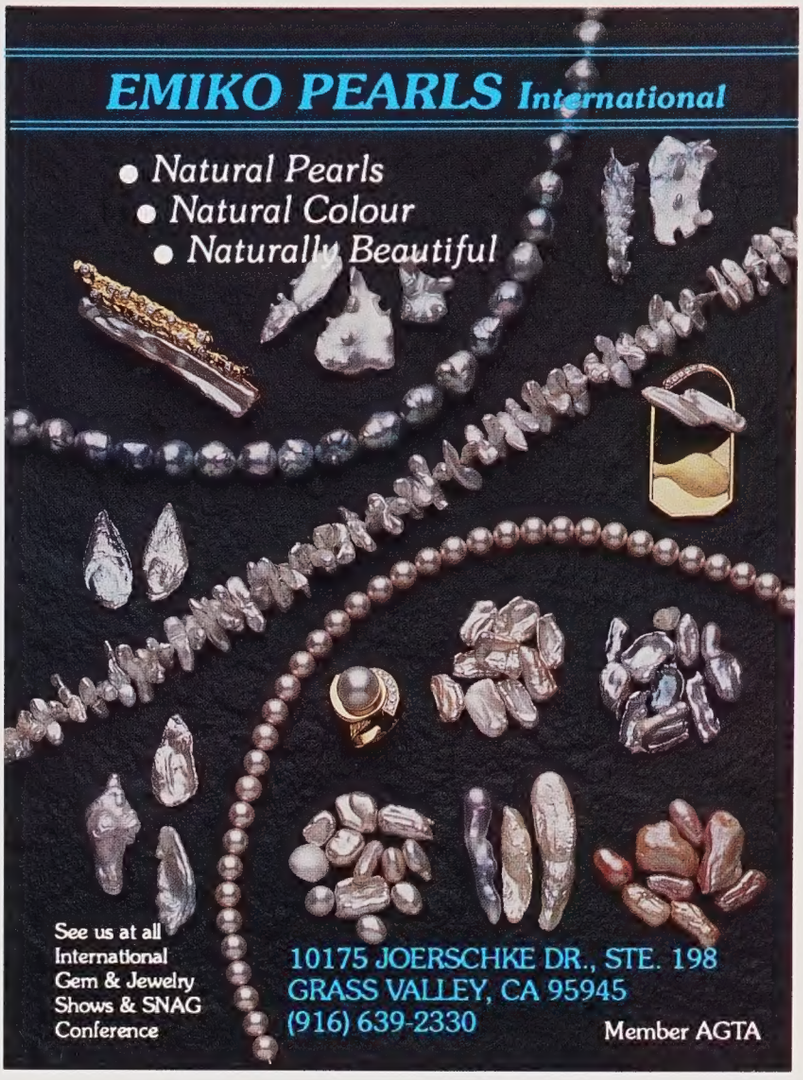

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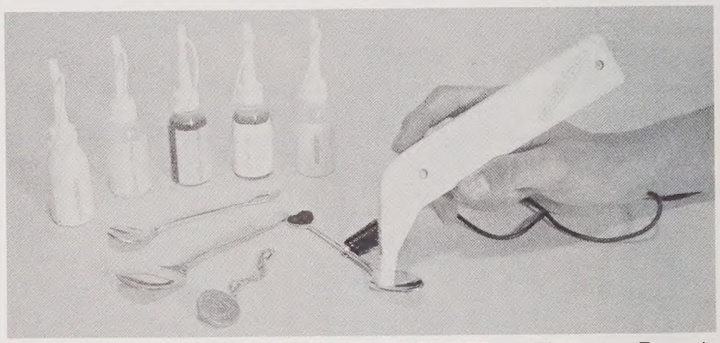

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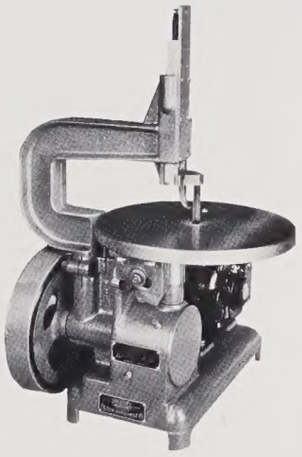

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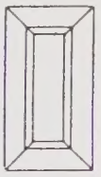

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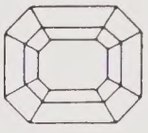

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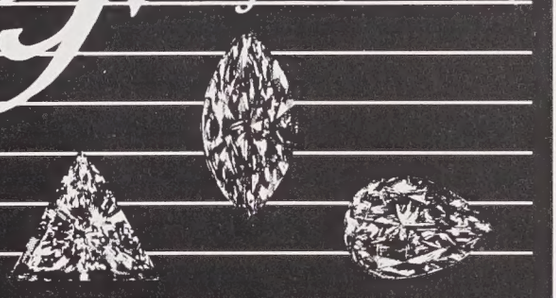

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Membership
The Society of North American Goldsmiths

The Society of North American Goldsmiths (SNAG) was formed in 1970 to promote contemporary metalwork and jewelry. Through its publications, services and advocacy, SNAG serves the fine art and jewelry communities. SNAG's publications and conferences provide technical information and critical insight to practitioners and teachers of metalwork. Professional metalsmiths, students, collectors, gallery owners and enthusiasts make up the dynamic mix of the Society.

Services

The Society's annual conference provides a forum for the exchange of many points of view. Speakers of national recognition offer stimulating discourse on a range of topics. Members of the Society attend the conference at reduced rates.

The Society sponsors important exhibitions of contemporary metalwork. Past SNAG shows have been mounted at the Renwick Gallery, the St. Paul Museum of Art and several galleries in New York City. These exhibitions are usually restricted to members only.

The Society maintains an audio-visual library, which contains the portfolios of Distinguished Members and other notable metalsmiths. Members can rent slides, films and videotapes at a nominal cost.

The Society operates a discount book service, through which important texts on all aspects of the field can be ordered at a reduced price.

Publications

Metalsmith is the only magazine in America devoted solely to the metal arts. Please see the reverse side of this page for a detailed description of this exciting magazine. Membership in the Society includes a subscription to *Metalsmith*.

The *SNAG Newsletter* is published bimonthly and is available to members only. It features timely information on exhibitions, workshops, conferences and job opportunities throughout North America.

Membership Categories

The Society offers several types of memberships, each tailored to a specific level of involvement in the field of contemporary metalsmithing.

- *General Membership* ($45) is open to everyone and includes subscriptions to *Metalsmith* and the *SNAG Newsletter*, reduced conference fees, access to all of SNAG's services and full voting privileges.
- *Student Membership* ($30) is offered at a reduced rate to anyone attending an accredited educational institution. This membership offers all the advantages of a *general membership* but does not carry voting privileges. Please send a copy of your student ID with membership application.
- *Distinguished Membership* ($45) is a special juried category, which is conferred upon members who demonstrate outstanding contributions to the field. This category of membership includes all publications and the other advantages described above.
- *Institutional Membership* ($45) is available for nonprofit organizations such as schools and libraries. Institutions receive *Metalsmith* magazine and the *SNAG Newsletter*.

Checks should be made payable to SNAG, in U.S. dollars only. Contributions are deductible within legal limits for tax purposes. Allow eight to ten weeks to receive your first copy of *Metalsmith*.

THE JOHN FREI CUSTOM WORKBENCH

What makes our benches so special? They are made of solid wood by expert cabinet makers with custom features. These rock solid benches weigh 150 lbs in maple, over 175 in oak, and are 38″ high, 26″ deep, and 49″ wide. They all have a steel-lined catch tray, locking door with integral burr tray and two concealed security drawers, plus six convenient tool drawers. Available from stock or made to your specifications. $750.00 for maple, $895.00 for oak

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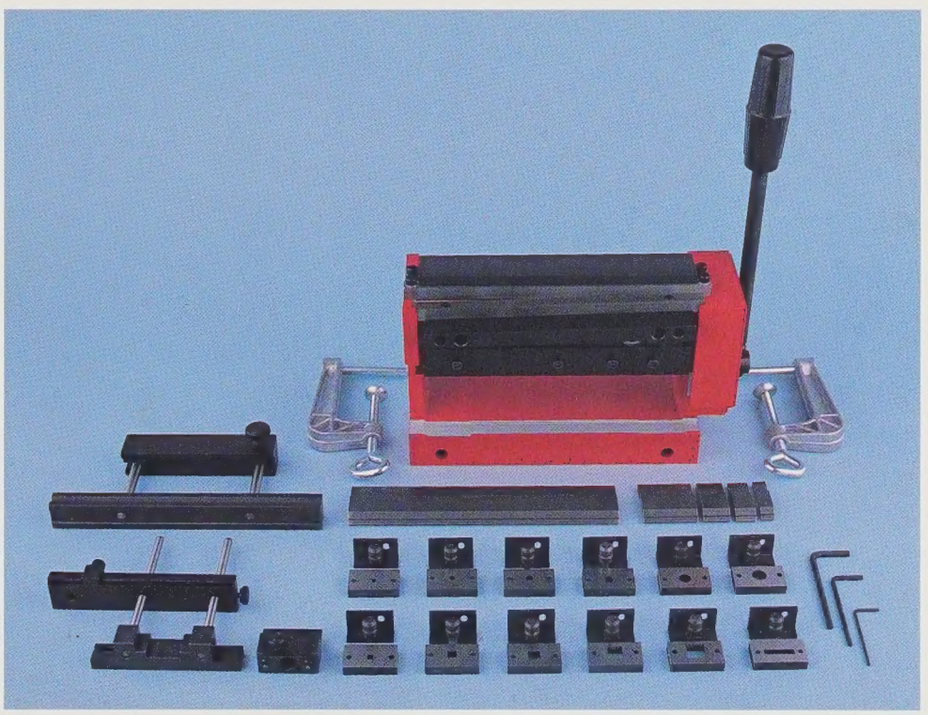

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Hole Punches:

○	3.0, 4.0, 5.0, 6.0, 8.0, 10.0mm
□	4 × 4, 6 × 6, 8 × 8, 10 × 10, 12 × 12mm
▭	4 × 20mm

Dimensions:

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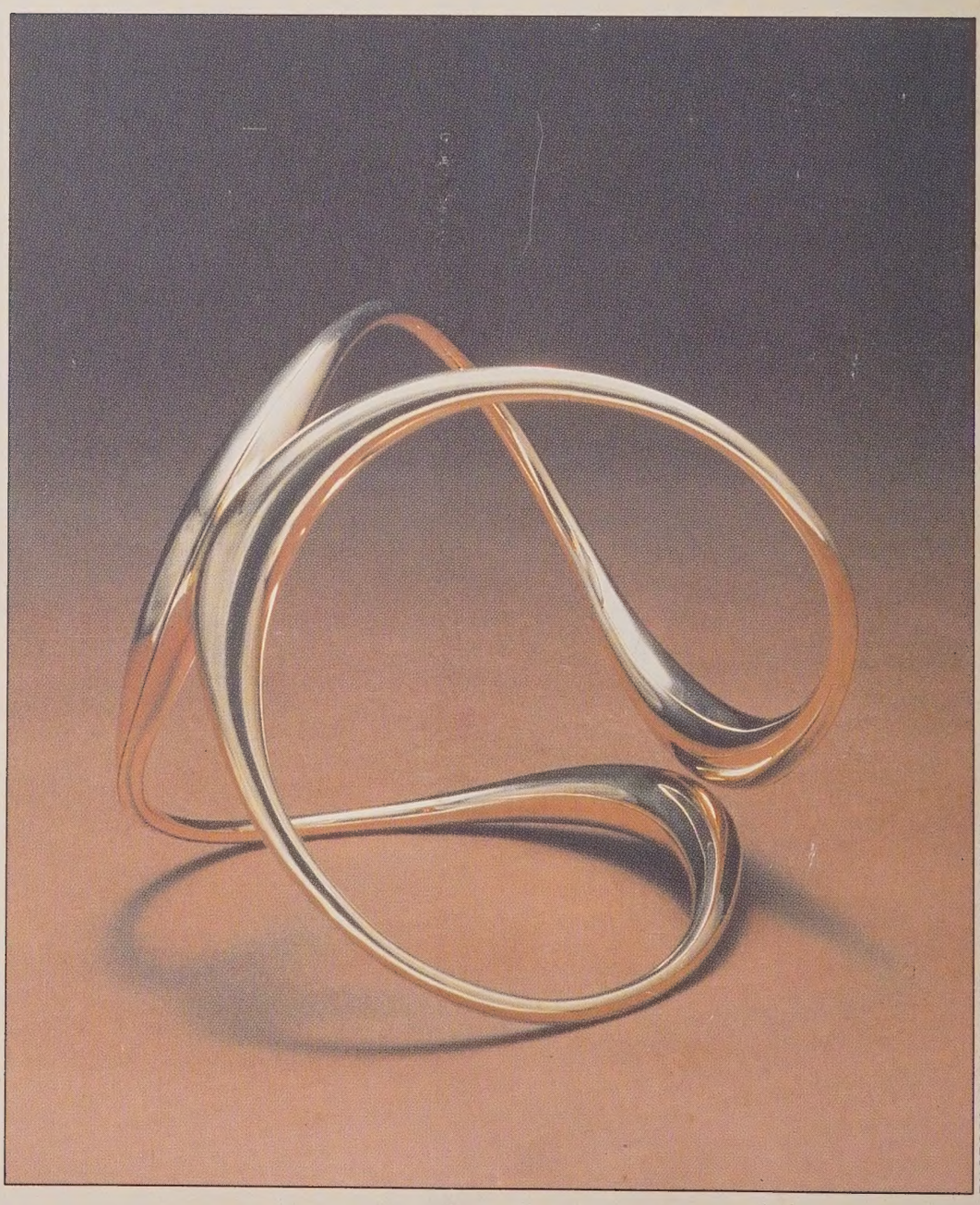

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